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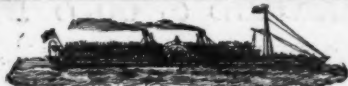
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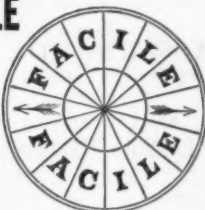
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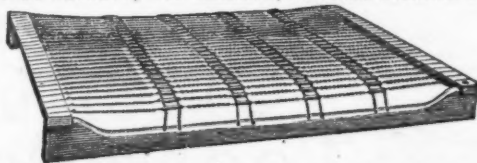
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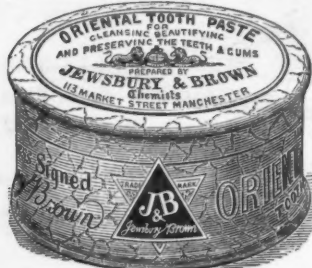
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AUGUST 1885.

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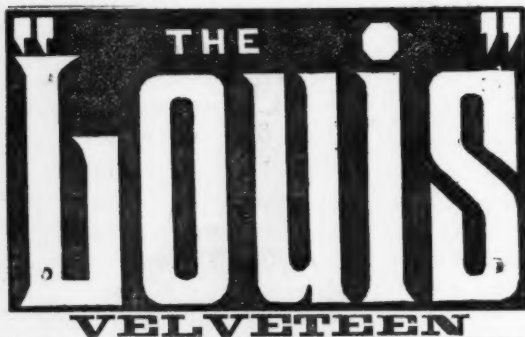
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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

AUGUST 1885.

White Heather:

A NOVEL.

BY WILLIAM BLACK.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ENTICEMENTS.

RONALD'S friendship with the hospitable widow and his acquaintanceship with those three boon-companions of hers grew apace; and many a merry evening they all of them had together in the brilliant little parlour, Ronald singing his own or any other songs without stint, the big skipper telling elaborately facetious Highland stories, the widow bountiful with her cigars and her Moët and Shandon. And yet he was ill, ill at ease. He would not admit to himself, of course, that he rather despised these new acquaintances—for were they not most generous and kind towards him?—nor yet that the loud hilarity he joined in was on his part at times a trifle forced. Indeed, he could not very well have defined the cause of this disquietude and restlessness and almost despair that was present to his consciousness even when the laugh was at its loudest and the glasses going round most merrily. But the truth was he had begun to lose heart in his work. The first glow of determination that had enabled him to withstand the depression of the dull days and the monotonous labour had subsided now. The brilliant future the Americans had painted for him did not seem so attractive. Meenie was away; perhaps never to be met with more; and the old glad days that were filled with the light of her presence were all gone now and

growing ever more and more distant. And in the solitude of the little room up there in the Port Dundas Road—with the grey atmosphere ever present at the windows, and the dull rumble of the carts and waggons without—he was now getting into a habit of pushing aside his books for a while, and letting his fancies go far afield; insomuch that his heart seemed to grow more and more sick within him, and more and more he grew to think that somehow life had gone all wrong with him.

There is in Glasgow a thoroughfare familiarly known as Balmanno Brae. It is in one of the poorer neighbourhoods of the town; and is in truth rather a squalid and uninteresting place; but it has the one striking peculiarity of being extraordinarily steep, having been built on the side of a considerable hill. Now one must have a powerful imagination to see in this long, abrupt, blue-grey thoroughfare—with its grimy pavements and house-fronts, and its gutters running with dirty water—any resemblance to the wide slopes of Ben Clebrig and the carolling rills that flow down to Loch Naver; but all the same Ronald had a curious fancy for mounting this long incline, and that at the hardest pace he could go. For sometimes, in that little room, he felt almost like a caged animal dying for a wider air, a more active work; and here at least was a height that enabled him to feel the power of his knees; while the mere upward progress was a kind of inspiriting thing, one always having a vague fancy that one is going to see farther in getting higher. Alas! there was but the one inevitable termination to these repeated climbings; and that not the wide panorama embracing Loch Loyal and Ben Hope and the far Kyle of Tongue, but a wretched little lane called Rotten Row—a double line of gloomy houses, with here and there an older-fashioned cottage with a thatched roof, and with everywhere pervading the close atmosphere an odour of boiled herrings. And then again, looking back, there was no yellow and wide-shining Strath-Terry, with its knolls of purple heather and its devious rippling burns, but only the great, dark, grim, mysterious city, weltering in its smoke, and dully groaning, as it were, under the grinding burden of its monotonous toil.

As the Twelfth of August drew near he became more and more restless. He had written to Lord Ailine to say that, if he could be of any use, he would take a run up to Inver-Mudal for a week or so, just to see things started for the season; but Lord Ailine had considerably refused the offer, saying that everything seemed going on well enough, except, indeed, that Lugar the

Gordon setter was in a fair way of being spoilt, for that, owing to Ronald's parting injunctions, there was not a man or boy about the place would subject the dog to any kind of chastisement or discipline whatever. And it sounded strange to Ronald to hear that he was still remembered away up there in the remote little hamlet.

On the morning of the day before the Twelfth his books did not get much attention. He kept going to the window to watch the arrivals at the railway-station opposite, wondering whether this one or that was off and away to the wide moors and the hills. Then, about midday, he saw a young lad bring up four dogs—a brace of setters, a small spaniel, and a big brown retriever—and give them over in charge to a porter. Well, human nature could not stand this any longer. His books were no longer thought of; on went his Glengarry cap; and in a couple of minutes he was across the road and into the station, where the porter was hauling the dogs along the platform.

'Here, my man, I'll manage the doggies for ye,' he said, getting hold of the chains and straps; and of course the dogs at once recognised in him a natural ally and were less alarmed. A shambling, bow-legged porter hauling at them they could not understand at all; but in the straight figure and sun-tanned cheek and clear eye of the new-comer they recognised features familiar to them; and then he spoke to them as if he knew them.

'Ay, and what's your name, then?—Bruce, or Wallace, or Soldier?—but there'll no be much work for you for a while yet. It's you, you two bonnie lassies, that'll be amongst the heather the morn; and well I can see ye'll work together, and back each other, and just set an example to human folk. And if ye show yourselves just a wee bit eager at the beginning o' the day—well, well, well, we all have our faults, and that one soon wears off. And what's your names, then?—Lufra, or Nell, or Bess, or Fan? And you, you wise auld chiel—I'm thinking ye could get a grip o' a mallard that would make him imagine he had got back into his mother's nest—you're a wise one—the Free Kirk elder o' the lot'—for, indeed, the rest of them were all pawing at him, and licking his hands, and whimpering their friendship. The porter had to point out to him that he, the porter, could not stand there the whole day with 'a wheen dogs;' whereupon Ronald led these new companions of his along to the dog-box that had been provided for them, and there, when they had been properly secured, the porter left him. Ronald could still talk to them, however; and ask them questions; and they seemed to understand

well enough ; indeed, he had not spent so pleasant a half-hour for many and many a day.

There chanced to come along the platform a little, wiry, elderly man, with a wholesome-looking, weather-tanned face, who was carrying a bundle of fishing-rods over his shoulder ; and seeing how Ronald was engaged he spoke to him in passing and began to talk about the dogs.

‘Perhaps they’re your dogs?’ Ronald said.

‘No, no, our folk are a’ fishing folk,’ said the little old man, who was probably a gardener or something of the kind ; and who seemed to take readily to this new acquaintance. ‘I’ve just been in to Glasgow to get a rod mended ; and to bring out a new one that the laird has bought for himself.’

He grinned in a curious, sarcastic way.

‘He’s rather a wee man ; and this rod—Lord-sakes, ye never saw such a thing ! it would break the back o’ a Samson—bless ye, the butt o’t’s like a weaver’s beam ; and for our gudeman to buy a thing like that—well, rich folk hae queer ways o’ spending their money.’

He was a friendly old man ; and this joke of his master having bought so tremendous an engine seemed to afford him so much enjoyment that when Ronald asked to be allowed to see this formidable weapon, he said at once—

‘Just you come along outside there, and we’ll put it thegither, and ye’ll see what kind o’ salmon-rod an old man o’ five-foot five thinks he can cast wi’—’

‘If it’s no taking up too much of your time,’ Ronald suggested ; but eager enough he was to get a salmon-rod into his fingers again.

‘I’ve three-quarters of an hour to wait,’ was the reply, ‘for I canna make out they train-books ava.’

They went out beyond the platform to an open space ; and very speedily the big rod was put together. It was indeed an enormous thing ; but a very fine rod, for all that ; and so beautifully balanced and so beautifully pliant that Ronald, after having made one or two passes through the air with it, could not help saying to the old man—and rather wistfully too—

‘I suppose ye dinna happen to have a reel about ye?’

‘That I have,’ was the instant answer, ‘and a brand-new hundred-yard line on it too. Would ye like to try a cast ? I’m thinking ye ken something about it.’

It was an odd kind of place to try the casting-power of a

salmon-rod, this dismal no-man's-land of empty trucks, and rusted railway-points, and black ashes ; but no sooner had Ronald begun to send out a good line—taking care to recover it so that it should not fray itself along the gritty ground—than the old man perceived he had to deal with no amateur.

‘Man, ye’re a dab, and no mistake ! As clean a line as ever I saw cast ! It’s no the first time *you’ve* handled a salmon-rod, I’ll be bound !’

‘It’s the best rod I’ve ever had in my hand,’ Ronald said, as he began to reel in the line again. ‘I’m much obliged to ye for letting me try a cast—it’s many a day now since I threw a line.’

They took the rod down and put it in its case.

‘I’m much obliged to ye,’ Ronald repeated (for the mere handling of this rod had fired his veins with a strange kind of excitement). ‘Will ye come and take a dram ?’

‘No, thank ye, I’m a teetotaler,’ said the other ; and then he glanced at Ronald curiously. ‘But ye seem to ken plenty about dogs, and about fishing, and so on—what are ye doing in Glasgow, and the morn the Twelfth ? Ye are not a town-lad ?’

‘No, I’m not ; but I have to live in the town at present,’ was the answer. ‘Well, good-day to ye ; and many thanks for the trial o’ the rod.’

‘Good-day, my lad ; I wish I had your years, and the strength o’ your shouthers.’

In passing, Ronald said good-bye again to the handsome setters, and the spaniel, and the old retriever ; and then he went on and out of the station ; but it was not to return to his books. The seeing of so many people going away to the north—the talking with the dogs—the trial of the big salmon-rod—had set his brain a little wild. What if he were to go back and beg of the withered old man to take him with him—ay, even as the humblest of gillies, to watch, gaff in hand, by the side of the broad silver-rippling stream, or to work in a boat on a blue-ruffled loch ? To jump into a third-class carriage, and know that the firm, inevitable grip of the engine was dragging him away into the clearer light, the wider skies, the glad, free air ! No wonder they said that fisher-folk were merry folk ; the very jolting of the engine would in such a case have a kind of music in it ; how easily could one make a song that would match with the swing of the train ! It was in his head now, as he rapidly and blindly walked away along the Cowcaddens, and along the New City Road, and along the

Western Road—random rhymes, random verses, that the jolly company could sing together as the engine thundered along—

*Out of the station we rattle away,
Wi' a clangour of axle and wheel;
There's a merrier sound that we know in the north—
The merry, merry shriek of the reel!*

*O you that shouther the heavy iron gun,
And have steep, steep braes to speel—
We envy you not; enough is for us
The merry, merry shriek of the reel!*

*When the twenty-four pounder leaps in t'ie air,
And the line flies out with a squeal—
O that is the blesseddest sound upon earth,
The merry, merry shriek of the reel!*

*So here's to good fellows!—for them that are not,
Let them gang and sup kail wi' the deil!
We've other work here—so look out, my lads,
For the first, sharp shriek of the reel!*

He did not care to put the rough-jolting verses down on paper; for the further and the more rapidly he walked away out of the town, the more was his brain busy with pictures and visions of all that they would be doing at this very moment at Inver-Mudal.

'God bless me,' he said to himself, 'I could almost swear I hear the dogs whimpering in the kennels.'

There would be the young lads looking after the panniers and the ponies; and the head-keeper up at the lodge discussing with Lord Ailine the best way of taking the hill in the morning, supposing the wind to remain in the same direction; and Mr. Murray at the door of the inn, smoking his pipe as usual; and the pretty Nelly in-doors waiting upon the shooting-party just arrived from the south and listening to all their wants. And Harry would be wondering, amid all this new bustle and turmoil, why his master did not put in an appearance; perhaps scanning each succeeding dog-cart or waggonette that came along the road; and then, not so blithe-spirited, making his way to the Doctor's house. Comfort awaited him there, at all events; for Ronald had heard that Meenie had taken pity on the little terrier; and that it was a good deal oftener with her than at the inn. Only, all this seemed now so strange; the great dusk city lay behind him like a night-

mare from which he had but partially escaped, and that with tightened breath; and he seemed to be straining his ears to catch those soft and friendly voices so far away. And then, later on, as the darkness fell, what would be happening there? The lads would be coming along to the inn; lamps lit, and chairs drawn in to the table; Mr. Murray looking in at times with his jokes, and perhaps with a bit of a treat on so great an occasion. And surely—surely—as they begin to talk of this year, and of last year, and of the changes—surely some one will say—perhaps Nelly, as she brings in the ale—but surely some one will say—as a mere word of friendly remembrance—‘Well, I wish Ronald was here now with his pipes, to play us *The Barren Rocks of Aden*.’ Only a single friendly word of remembrance—it was all that he craved.

He struck away south through Dowanhill and Partick, and crossed the Clyde at Govan Ferry; then he made his way back to the town and Jamaica-street bridge; and finally, it being now dusk, looked in to see whether Mrs. Menzies was at leisure for the evening.

‘What’s the matter, Ronald?’ she said, instantly, as he entered; for she noticed that his look was careworn and strange.

‘Well, Katie, lass, I don’t quite know what’s the matter wi’ me; but I feel as if I just couldna go back to that room of mine and sit there by myself—at least not yet; I think I’ve been put a bit daft wi’ seeing the people going away for the Twelfth; and if ye wouldna mind my sitting here for a while with ye, for the sake o’ company—’

‘Mind!’ she said. ‘Mind! What I do mind is that you should be ganging to that lodging-house at a’, when there’s a room—and a comfortable room, though I say it that shouldn’t—in this very house at your disposal, whenever ye like to bring your trunk till it. There it is—an empty room, used by nobody—and who more welcome to it than my ain cousin? I’ll tell ye what, Ronald, my lad, ye’re wearing yoursel’ away on a gowk’s errand. Your certificate! How do ye ken ye’ll get your certificate? How do ye ken ye will do such great things with it when ye get it? You’re a young man; you’ll no be a young man twice; what I say is, take your fling when ye can get it! Look at Jimmy Laidlaw—he’s off the first thing in the morning to the Mearns—15*l*. for his share of the shooting—do ye think he can shoot like you?—and why should ye no have had your share too—?’

‘Well, it was very kind of you, Katie, woman, to make the offer; but—but—there’s a time for everything’—

'Man, I could have driven ye cut every morning in the dog-cart!—and welcome. I'm no for having young folk waste the best years of their life, and find out how little use the rest o'ts to them—no that I consider mysel' one o' the auld folk yet—'

'You, Katie, dear!' whined old Mother Paterson, from her millinery-corner. 'You—just in the prime o' youth, one might say! you, one o' the auld folk?—ay, in thirty years' time maybe!'

'Take my advice, Ronald, my lad,' said the widow, boldly. 'Dinna slave away for naething—because folk have put fancy notions into your head. Have a better opinion o' yoursel'! Take your chance o' life when ye can get it—books and books, what's the use o' books?'

'Too late now—I've made my bed and maun lie on it,' he said, gloomily; but then he seemed to try to shake off this depression. 'Well, well, lass, Rome was not built in a day. And if I were to throw aside my books, what then? How would that serve? Think ye that that would make it any the easier for me to get a three-weeks' shooting wi' Jimmy Laidlaw?'

'And indeed ye might have had that in any case, and welcome,' said Kate Menzies, with a toss of her head. 'Who is Jimmy Laidlaw, I wonder! But it's no use arguin wi' ye, Ronald, lad; he that will to Cupar maun to Cupar; only I dinna like to see ye looking just ill.'

'Enough said, lass; I didna come here to torment ye with my wretched affairs,' he answered; and at this moment the maid-servant entered to lay the cloth for supper, while Mrs. Menzies withdrew to make herself gorgeous for the occasion.

He was left with old Mother Paterson.

'There's none so blind as them that winna see,' she began, in her whining voice.

'What is't?'

'Ay, ay,' she continued, in a sort of maundering soliloquy, 'a braw woman like that—and free-handed as the day—she could have plenty offers if she liked. But there's none so blind as them that winna see. There's Mr. Laidlaw there—a good-looking man, and wan wi' a good penny at the bank; and wouldna he just jump at the chance, if she had a nod or a wink for him? But Katie was aye like that—headstrong—she would aye have her ain way—and there she is, a single woman, a braw, handsome, young woman—and weel provided for—weel provided for—only it's no every one that takes her fancy. A prize like that, to be had for the asking! Dear me—but there's nane so blind as them that winna see.'

It was not by any means the first time that Mother Paterson had managed to drop a few dark hints—and much to his embarrassment, moreover, for he could not pretend to ignore their purport. Nay, there was something more than that. Kate Menzies' rough and ready friendliness for her cousin had of late become more and more pronounced—almost obtrusive, indeed. She wanted to have the mastery of his actions altogether. She would have him pitch his books aside and come for a drive with her whether he was in the humour or no. She offered him the occupancy of a room which, if it was not actually within the tavern, communicated with it. She seemed unable to understand why he should object to her paying 15*l.* to obtain for him a share in a small bit of conjoint shooting out at the Mearns. And so forth, in many ways. Well, these things, taken by themselves, he might have attributed to a somewhat tempestuous good-nature; but here was this old woman, whenever a chance occurred, whining about the folly of people who did not see that Katie dear was so handsome, and generous, and so marvellous a matrimonial prize. Nor could he very well tell her to mind her own business; for that would be admitting that he understood her hints.

However, on this occasion he had not to listen long; for presently Mrs. Menzies returned, smiling, good-natured, radiant in further finery; and then they all had supper together; and she did her best to console her cousin for being cooped up in the great city on the eve of the Twelfth. And Ronald was very grateful to her; and perhaps, in his eager desire to keep up this flow of high spirits, and to forget what was happening at Inver-Mudal and about to happen, he may have drank a little too much; at all events, when Laidlaw and Jaap and the skipper came in they found him in a very merry mood, and Kate Menzies equally hilarious and happy. Songs?—he was going to no Harmony Club that night, he declared—he would sing them as many songs as ever they liked—but he was not going to forsake his cousin. Nor were the others the least unwilling to remain where they were; for here they were in privacy; and the singing was better; and the liquor unexceptionable. The blue smoke rose quietly into the air; the fumes of Long John warmed blood and brain; and then from time to time they heard of the brave, or beautiful, or heart-broken maidens of Scotch song—Maggie Lauder, or Nelly Munro, or Barbara Allan, as the chance might be—and music and good-fellowship and whisky all combined to throw a romantic halo round these simple heroines.

‘But sing us one o’ your own, Ronald, my lad—there’s none better, and that’s what I say!’ cried the widow; and as she happened to be passing his chair at the time—going to the side-board for some lemons—she slapped him on the shoulder by way of encouragement.

‘One o’ my own?’ said he. ‘But which—which—lass? Oh, well, here’s one.’

He lay back in his chair, and quite at haphazard and carelessly and jovially began to sing—in that clearly penetrating voice that neither tobacco-smoke nor whisky seemed to affect—

*Roses white, roses red,
Roses in the lane,
Tell me, roses red and white,
Where is——*

And then suddenly something seemed to grip his heart. But the stumble was only for the fiftieth part of a second. He continued:

Where is Jeannie gane?

And so he finished the careless little verses. Nevertheless, Kate Menzies, returning to her seat, had noticed that quick, instinctive pulling of himself up.

‘And who’s Jeannie when she’s at home?’ she asked, saucily.

‘Jeannie?’ he said, with apparent indifference. ‘Jeannie? There’s plenty o’ that name about.’

‘Ay; and how many o’ them are at Inver-Mudal?’ she asked, regarding him shrewdly—and with an air which he resented.

But the little incident passed. There was more singing, drinking, smoking, talking of nonsense, and laughing. And at last the time came for the merry companions to separate; and he went away home through the dark streets, alone. He had drunk too much, it must be admitted; but he had a hard head; and he had kept his wits about him; and even now as he ascended the stone stairs to his lodgings he remembered with a kind of shiver, and also with not a little heartfelt satisfaction, how he had just managed to save himself from bringing Meenie’s name before that crew.

CHAPTER XXX.

ENTANGLEMENTS.

AND then came along the great evening on which the first of Ronald's songs that Mr. Jaap had set to music was to be sung at the Harmony Club. Ronald had unluckily got into the way of going a good deal to that club. It was a relief from weary days and vain regrets; it was a way of escape from the too profuse favours that Kate Menzies wished to shower upon him. Moreover, he had become very popular there. His laugh was hearty; his jokes and sarcasms were always good-natured; he could drink with the best without getting quarrelsome. His acquaintanceship rapidly extended; his society was eagerly bid for, in the rough and ready fashion that prevails towards midnight; and long after the club was closed certain of these boon-companions would 'keep it up' in this or the other bachelor's lodgings, while through the open window there rang out into the empty street the oft-repeated chorus—

*'We are na fou', we're nae that fou',
But just a droppie in our e'e;
The cock may craw, the day may daw,
And aye we'll taste the barley bree!'*

The night-time seemed to go by so easily; the day-time was so slow. He still did his best, it is true, to get on with this work that had so completely lost all its fascination for him; and he tried hard to banish dreams. For one thing, he had gathered together all the fragments of verse he had written about Meenie, and had added thereto the little sketch of Inver-Mudal she had given him; and that parcel he had resolutely locked away, so that he should no longer be tempted to waste the hours in idle musings, and in useless catechising of himself as to how he came to be in Glasgow at all. He had forborne to ask from Maggie the answer that Meenie had sent to her letter. In truth, there were many such; for there was almost a constant correspondence between these two; and as the chief subject of Maggie's writing was always and ever Ronald, there were no doubt references to him in the replies that came from Inver-Mudal. But he only heard vaguely of these; he did not call often at his brother's house; and he grew to imagine that the next definite news he

would hear about Meenie would be to the effect that she had been sent to live with the Stuarts of Glengask, with a view to her possible marriage with some person in their rank of life.

There was a goodly to-do at the Harmony Club on the evening of the production of the new song; for Ronald, as has been said, was much of a favourite; and his friends declared that if Jaap's music was at all up to the mark, then the new piece would be placed on the standard and permanent list. Mr. Jaap's little circle, on the other hand, who had heard the air, were convinced that the refrain would be caught at once; and as the success of the song seemed thus secure, Mrs. Menzies had resolved to celebrate the occasion by a supper after the performance, and Jimmy Laidlaw had presented her, for that purpose, with some game which he declared was of his own shooting.

'What's the use o' making such a fuss about nothing?' Ronald grumbled.

'What?' retorted the big skipper, facetiously. 'Naething? Is bringing out a new poet naething?'

'I tell ye this,' said Laidlaw, 'Kate Menzies 'll make the Moët and Shandon whizz like Cora Linn.'

Now this drinking-song, as it turned out, was a very curious kind of drinking-song. Observe that it was written by a young fellow of eight-and-twenty; of splendid physique, and of as yet untouched nerve; who could not possibly have had wide experience of the vanities and disappointments of human life. What iron had entered into his soul, then, that a gay and joyous drinking-song should have been written in this fashion?—

*Good friends and neighbours, life is short,
And man, they say, is made to mourn;
Dame Fortune makes us all her sport,
And laughs our very best to scorn:
Well, well; we'll have, if that be so,
A merry glass before we go.*

*The blue-eyed lass will change her mind,
And give her kisses elsewhere;
And she'll be cruel that was kind,
And pass you by with but a stare:
Well, well; we'll have, if that be so,
A merry glass before we go.*

*The silly laddie sits and fills
 Wi' dreams and schemes the first o' life ;
 And then comes heap on heap o' ills,
 And squalling bairns and scolding wife :
 Well, well ; we'll have, if that be so,
 A merry glass before we go.*

*Come stir the fire and make us warm ;
 The night without is dark and wet ;
 An hour or twa 'twill do nae harm
 The dints o' fortune to forget :
 So now we'll have, come weal or woe,
 Another glass before we go.*

*To bonny lasses, honest blades,
 We'll up and give a hearty cheer ;
 Contention is the worst of trades—
 We drink their health, both far and near :
 And so we'll have, come weal or woe,
 Another glass before we go.*

*And here's ourselves !—no much to boast ;
 For man's a wean that lives and learns ;
 And some win hame, and some are lost ;
 But still—we're all John Thomson's bairns !
 So here, your hand !—come weal or woe,
 Another glass before we go !*

'And some win hame, and some are lost'—this was a curious note to strike in a bacchanalian song ; but of course in that atmosphere of tobacco and whisky and loud-voiced merriment such minor touches were altogether unnoticed.

'Gentlemen,' called out the rubicund chairman, rapping on the table, 'silence, if you please. Mr. Aikman is about to favour us with a new song written by our recently-elected member, Mr. Ronald Strang, the music by our old friend Mr. Jaap. Silence—silence, if you please.'

Mr. Aikman, who was a melancholy-looking youth, with a white face, straw-coloured hair, and almost colourless eyes, stepped on to the platform, and after the accompanist had played a few bars of prelude, began the song. Feeble as the young man looked, he had notwithstanding a powerful baritone voice ; and the air was simple, with a well-marked swing in it ; so that the refrain—at first rather uncertain and experimental—became after the first verse more and more general, until it may be said that the whole

room formed the chorus. And from the very beginning it was clear that the new song was going to be a great success. Any undercurrent of reflection—or even of sadness—there might be in it was not perceived at all by this roaring assemblage; the refrain was the practical and actual thing; and when once they had fairly grasped the air, they sang the chorus with a will. Nay, amid the loud burst of applause that followed the last verse came numerous cries for an encore; and these increased until the whole room was clamorous; and then the pale-faced youth had to step back on to the platform and get through the whole of the verses again.

*So here, your hand!—come weal or woe,
Another glass before we go!*

roared the big skipper and Jimmy Laidlaw with the best of them; and then in the renewed thunder of cheering that followed—

‘Man, I wish Kate Menzies was here,’ said the one; and—

‘Your health, Ronald, lad; ye’ve done the trick this time,’ said the other.

‘Gentlemen,’ said the chairman, again calling them to silence, ‘I propose that the thanks of the club be given to these two members whom I have named and who have kindly allowed us to place this capital song on our permanent list.’

‘I second that, Mr. Chairman,’ said a little, round, fat man, with a beaming countenance and a bald head; ‘and I propose that we sing that song every night just afore we leave.’

But this last suggestion was drowned amidst laughter and cries of dissent. ‘What?—instead of “Auld Lang Syne”?’ ‘Ye’re daft, John Campbell.’ ‘Would ye hae the ghost o’ Robbie Burns turning up?’ Indeed, the chairman had to interpose and suavely say that while the song they had just heard would bring any such pleasant evenings as they spent together to an appropriate close, still, they would not disturb established precedent; there would be many other occasions, he hoped, for them to hear this production of two of their most talented members.

In the interval of noise and talk and laughter that followed, it seemed to Ronald that half the people in the hall wanted him to drink with them. Fame came to him in the shape of unlimited proffers of glasses of whisky; and he experienced so much of the delight of having become a public character as consisted in absolute strangers assuming the right to make his acquaintance offhand. Of course they were all members of the same club;

and in no case was very strict etiquette observed within these four walls; nevertheless Ronald found that he had immediately and indefinitely enlarged the circle of his acquaintance; and that this meant drink.

‘Another glass?’ he said, to one of those strangers who had thus casually strolled up to the table where he sate. ‘My good friend, there was nothing said in that wretched song about a cask-full. I’ve had too many other ones already.’

However, relief came; the chairman hammered on the table; the business of the evening was resumed; and the skipper, Jaap, Laidlaw and Ronald were left to themselves.

Now there is no doubt that this little circle of friends was highly elated over the success of the new song; and Ronald had been pleased enough to hear the words he had written so quickly caught up and echoed by that, to him, big assemblage. Probably, too, they had all of them, in the enthusiasm of the moment, been somewhat liberal in their cups; at all events, a little later on in the evening, when Jimmy Laidlaw stormily demanded that Ronald should sing a song from the platform—to show them what East Lothian could do, as Kate Menzies had said—Ronald did not at once, as usual, shrink from the thought of facing so large an audience. It was the question of the accompaniment, he said. He had had no practice in singing to a piano. He would put the man out. Why should he not sing here—if sing he must—at the table where they were sitting? That was what he was used to; he had no skill in keeping correct time; he would only bother the accompanist, and bewilder himself.

‘No, I’ll tell ye what it is, Ronald, my lad,’ his friend Jaap said to him. ‘I’ll play the accompaniment for ye, if ye pick out something I’m familiar wi’; and don’t you heed me; you look after yourself. Even if ye change the key—and that’s not likely—I’ll look after ye. Is’t a bargain?’

Well, he was not afraid—on this occasion. It was announced from the chair that Mr. Ronald Strang, to whom they were already indebted, would favour the company with ‘The MacGregors’ Gathering,’ accompanied by Mr. Jaap; and in the rattle of applause that followed this announcement, Ronald made his way across the floor and went up the couple of steps leading to the platform. Why he had consented, he hardly knew; nor did he stay to ask. It was enough that he had to face this long hall, and its groups of faces seen through the pale haze of the tobacco-smoke; and then the first notes of the piano startled him into

the necessity of getting into the same key. He began—a little bewildered, perhaps, and hearing his own voice too consciously—

*'The moon's on the lake, and the mist's on the brae,
And the clan has a name that is nameless by day.'*

'Louder, man, louder!' the accompanist muttered, under his breath.

Whether it was this admonition, or whether it was that he gained confidence from feeling himself in harmony with the firm-struck notes of the accompaniment, his voice rose in clearness and courage, and he got through the first verse with very fair success. Nay, when he came to the second, and the music went into a pathetic minor, the sensitiveness of his ear still carried him through bravely.

*'Glenorchy's proud mountains, Colchurn and her towers,
Glenstrae and Glen Lyon no longer are ours—
We're landless, landless, landless, Gregalach'*

—all this was very well done; for he began to forget his audience a little; and to put into his singing something of the expression that had come naturally enough to him when he was away on the Clebrig slopes or wandering along Strath-Terry. As for the audience—when he had finished and stepped back to his seat—they seemed quite electrified. Not often had such a clear-ringing voice penetrated that murky atmosphere. But nothing would induce Ronald to repeat the performance.

'What made me do it?' he kept asking himself. 'What made me do it? Bless me, surely I'm no fou?'

'Ye've got a most extraordinarily fine voice, Mr. Strang,' the chairman said, in his most complaisant manner, 'I hope it's not the last time ye'll favour us.'

Ronald did not answer this. He seemed at once moody and restless. Presently he said—

'Come away, lads, come away. In God's name let's get a breath o' fresh air—the smoke o' this place is like the bottomless pit.'

'Then let's gang down and have a chat wi' Kate Menzies,' said Jimmy Laidlaw at once.

'Ye're after that supper, Jimmy!' the big skipper said, facetiously.

'What for no? Would ye disappoint the woman; and her sae anxious to hear what happened to Strang's poetry? Come

on, Ronald—she'll be as proud as Punch. And we'll tell her about "The MacGregors' Gathering"—she said East Lothian would show them something.'

'Very well, then—very well; anything to get out o' here,' Ronald said; and away they all went down to the tavern.

The widow received them most graciously; and very sumptuous indeed was the entertainment she had provided for them. She knew that the drinking-song would be successful—if the folk had common sense, and ears. And he had sung 'The MacGregors' Gathering' too?—well, had they ever heard singing like that before?

'But they have been worrying you?' she said, glancing shrewdly at him. 'Or what's the matter—ye look down in the mouth—indeed, Ronald, ye've never looked yoursel' since the night ye came in here just before the grouse-shooting began. Here, man, drink a glass o' champagne; that'll rouse ye up.'

Old Mother Paterson was at this moment opening a bottle.

'Not one other drop of anything, Katie, lass, will I drink this night,' Ronald said.

'What? A lively supper we're likely to have, then!' the widow cried. 'Where's your spunk, man? I think ye're broken-hearted about some lassie—that's what it is! Here, now.'

She brought him the foaming glass of champagne; but he would not look at it.

'And if I drink to your health out o' the same glass?'

She touched the glass with her lips.

'There, now, if you're a man, ye'll no refuse noo.'

Nor could he. And then the supper came along; and there was eating and talking and laughing and further drinking, until a kind of galvanised hilarity sprang up once more amongst them. And she would have Ronald declare to them which of the lasses in Sutherlandshire it was who had broken his heart for him; and, in order to get her away from that subject, he was very amenable in her hands, and would do anything she bade him, singing first one song and then another, and not refusing the drinking of successive toasts. As for the others, they very prudently declined having anything to do with champagne. But Ronald was her pet, her favourite; and she had got a special box of cigars for him—all wrapped up in silver-foil and labelled; and she would have them tell her over and over again how Ronald's voice sounded in the long hall when he sang—

'Glenstrae and Glen Lyon no longer are ours'

and she would have them tell her again of the thunders of cheering that followed—

*Well, well; we'll have, if that be so,
Another glass before we go.*

Nay, she would have them try a verse or two of it there and then—led by Mr. Jaap; and she herself joined in the chorus; and they clinked their glasses together; and were proud of their vocalisation and their good comradeship. Indeed, they prolonged this jovial evening as late as the law allowed them; and then the widow said, gaily—

‘There’s that poor man thinks I’m gaun to allow him to gang away to that wretched hole o’ a lodging o’ his, where he’s just eating his heart out wi’ solitariness and a wheen useless books. But I’m not. I ken better than that, Ronald, my lad. Whilst ye’ve a’ been singing and roaring, I’ve had a room got ready for ye; and there ye’ll sleep this night, my man—for I’m not going to hae ye march away through the lonely streets, and maybe cut your throat ere daybreak; and ye can lock yourself in, if ye’re feared that any warlock or bogle is likely to come and snatch ye; and in the morning ye’ll come down and have your breakfast wi’ Auntie Paterson and me—and then—what then? What do ye think? When the dog-cart’s at the door, and me gaun to drive ye oot to Campsie Glen? There, laddie, that’s the programme; and wet or dry is my motto. If it’s wet we’ll sing “Come under my plaidie”; and we’ll take a drop o’ something comfortable wi’ us to keep out the rain.’

‘I wish I was gaun wi’ ye, Mistress,’ the big skipper said.

‘Two’s company and three’s none,’ said Kate Menzies, with a frank laugh. ‘Is’t a bargain, Ronald?’

‘It’s a bargain, lass; and there’s my hand on’t,’ he said. ‘Now, where’s this room—for I don’t know whether it has been the smoke, or the singing, or the whisky, or all o’ them together, but my head’s like a ship sailing before the wind, without any helm to steer her.’

‘Your head!’ she said, proudly. ‘Your head’s like iron, man; there’s nothing the matter wi’ you. And here’s Alec—he’ll show ye where your room is; and in the morning ring for whatever ye want; mind ye, a glass o’ champagne and angostura bitters is just first-rate; and we’ll have breakfast whatever hour ye please—and then we’ll be off to Campsie Glen.’

The little party now broke up, each going his several way;

and Ronald, having bade them all good-night, followed the ostler-lad Alec along one or two gloomy corridors until he found the room that had been prepared for him. As he got to bed he was rather sick and sorry about the whole night's proceedings, he scarcely knew why; and his thinking faculty was in a nebulous condition; and he only vaguely knew that he would rather not have pledged himself to go to Campsie Glen on the following morning. No matter—*'another glass before we go,'* that was the last of the song they had all shouted: he had forgotten that other line—*'and some win hame and some are lost.'*

CHAPTER XXXI.

CAMPSIE GLEN.

THE next morning, between nine and ten o'clock, there was a rapping at his door, and then a further rapping, and then he awoke—confused, uncertain as to his whereabouts, and with his head going like a threshing-machine. Again there came the loud rapping.

'Come in, then,' he called aloud.

The door was opened, and there was the young widow smiling and jocund as the morn, and very smartly attired; and alongside of her was a servant-lass bearing a small tray, on which were a tumbler, a pint bottle of champagne, and some angostura bitters.

'Bless me, woman,' he said, 'I was wondering where I was. And what's this now?—do ye want to make a drunkard o' me?'

'Not I,' said Kate Menzies, blithely, 'I want to make a man o' ye. Ye'll just take a glass o' this, Ronald, my lad; and then ye'll get up and come down to breakfast; for we're going to have a splendid drive. The weather's as bright and clear as a new shilling; and I've been up since seven o'clock, and I'm free for the day now. Here ye are, lad; this'll put some life into ye.'

She shook a few drops of bitters into the tumbler, and then poured out a foaming measure of the amber-coloured wine, and offered it to him. He refused to take it.

'I canna look at it, lass. There was too much o' that going last night.'

'And the very reason you should take a glass now!' she said. 'Well, I'll leave it on the mantelpiece, and ye can take it when

ye get up. Make haste, Ronald, lad; it's a pity to lose so fine a morning.'

When they had left, he dressed as rapidly as possible, and went down. Breakfast was awaiting him—though it did not tempt him much. And then, by and bye, the smart dog-cart was at the door; and a hamper was put in; and Kate Menzies got up and took the reins. There was no sick-and-sorriness about her, at all events. She was radiant, and laughing, and saucy; she wore a driving coat fastened at the neck by a horse-shoe brooch of brilliants; and a white straw hat with a wide-sweeping jet-black ostrich feather. It was clear that the tavern was a paying concern.

'And why will ye aye sit behind, Mr. Strang?' old Mother Paterson whined, as she made herself comfortable in front. 'I am sure Katie would rather have ye here than an auld wife like me. Ye could talk to her ever so much better.'

'That would be a way to go driving through Glasgow town,' he said, as he swung himself up on the back seat; 'a man in front, and a woman behind! never you fear; there can be plenty of talking done as it is.'

But as they drove away through the city—and even Glasgow looked quite bright and cheerful on this sunny morning—and there was a stirring of cool air that was grateful enough to his throbbing temples—it appeared that the buxom widow wanted to have most of the talking to herself. She was very merry; and laughed at his penitential scorn of himself; and was for spurring him on to further poetical efforts.

'East Lothian for ever!' she was saying, as they got away out by the north of the town. 'Didna I tell them? Ay, and ye've got to do something better yet, Ronald, my lad, than the "other glass before we go." You're no at that time o' life yet, to talk as if everything had gone wrong; and the blue-eyed lass—what blue-eyed lass was it, I wonder, that passed ye by with but a stare? Let her, and welcome, the hussy; there's plenty mair. But no, my lad, what I want ye to write is a song about Scotland, and the East Lothian part o't especially. Ye've no lived long enough in the Hielans to forget your ain country, have ye?—and where's there a song about Scotland now-a-days? "Caledonia's hills and dales"?—stuff!—I wonder Jaap would hae bothered his head about rubbish like that. No, no; we'll show them whether East Lothian canna do the trick!—and it's no the Harmony Club, but the City Hall o' Glasgow that ye'll hear that

song sung in—that's better like! Ye mind what Robbie says, Ronald, my lad?—

*'E'en then a wish, I mind its power—
A wish that to my latest hour
Shall strongly heave my breast—
That I for poor auld Scotland's sake,
Some usefu' plan or book could make,
Or sing a sang at least.'*

That's what ye've got to do yet, my man.'

'Ay, ay, lass; and I'm looking forward to having a monument in George's Square, and to folk frae America coming to buy photographs o' Whittermains.'

'Ye may laugh; but stranger things have happened,' said Kate Menzies, boldly; for how could she know that America—at least, Chicago—had already pronounced upon the poetical claims of her cousin Ronald, and that in no very encouraging fashion?

And so they bowled along the wide whinstone road, out into this open landscape that seemed to lie behind a thin veil of pale-blue smoke. It was the country, no doubt; but a kind of sophisticated country; there were occasional grimy villages, and railway-embankments, and canals, and what not; and the pathway that ran alongside the wide highway was of black ashes—not much like a Sutherlandshire road. However, as they got still further away from the town, matters improved. There were hedges and woods—getting a touch of the golden autumn on their foliage now; the landscape grew brighter; those hills far ahead of them rose into a fairly clear blue sky. And then the brisk motion and the fresher air seemed to drive away from him the dismal recollections of the previous night; he ceased to upbraid himself for having been induced to sing before all those people; he would atone for the recklessness of his potations by taking greater care in the future. So that when in due course of time they reached the inn at the foot of Campsie Glen, and had the horse and trap put up, and set out to explore the beauties of that not too savage solitude, he was in a sufficiently cheerful frame of mind, and Kate Menzies had no reason to complain of her companion.

They had brought a luncheon-basket with them; and as he had refused the proffered aid of a stable-lad, he had to carry this himself, and Kate Menzies was a liberal provider. Accordingly, as they began to make their way up the steep and slippery ascent—

for rain had recently fallen, and the narrow path was sloppy enough—he had to leave the two women to look after themselves; and a fine haphazard scramble and hauling and pushing—with screams of fright and bursts of laughter—ensued. This was hardly the proper mood in which to seek out Nature in her sylvan retreats; but the truth is that the glen itself did not wear a very romantic aspect. No doubt there were massive boulders in the bed of the stream; and they had to clamber past precipitous rocks; and everywhere overhead was a wilderness of foliage. But everything was dull-hued somehow, and damp-looking, and dismal; the green-mossed boulders, the stems of the trees, the dark red earth were all of a sombre hue; while here and there the eye caught sight of a bit of newspaper, or of an empty soda-water bottle, or perchance of the non-idyllic figure of a Glasgow youth seated astride a fallen bough, a pot-hat on his head, and a Manilla cheroot in his mouth. But still, it was more of the country than the Broomielaw; and when Kate and her companion had to pause in their panting struggle up the slippery path, and after she had recovered her breath sufficiently to demand a halt, she would turn to pick ferns from the dripping rocks, or to ask Ronald if there were any more picturesque place than this in Sutherlandshire. Now Ronald was not in the least afflicted by the common curse of travellers—the desire for comparison; he was well content to say that it was ‘a pretty bit glen’; for one thing his attention was chiefly devoted to keeping his footing, for the heavy basket was a sore encumbrance.

However, after some further climbing, they reached certain drier altitudes; and there the hamper was deposited; while they looked out for such trunks or big stones as would make convenient seats. The old woman was speechless from exhaustion; Kate was laughing at her own breathlessness, or miscalling the place for having dirtied her boots and her skirts; while Ronald was bringing things together for their comfort, so that they could have their luncheon in peace. This was not quite the same kind of a luncheon-party as that he had attended on the shores of the far northern loch—with Miss Carry complacently regarding the silver-clear salmon lying on the smooth, dry greensward; and the American talking in his friendly fashion of the splendid future that lay before a capable and energetic young fellow in the great country beyond the seas; while all around them the sweet air was blowing, and the clear light shining, and the white clouds sailing high over the Clebrig slopes. Things were changed with

him since then—he did not himself know how much they had changed. But in all circumstances he was abundantly good-natured, and grateful for any kindness shown him; and as Kate Menzies had projected this trip mainly on his account, he did his best to promote good-fellowship, and was serviceable and handy, and took her raillery in excellent part.

‘Katie, dear,’ whimpered old Mother Paterson, as Ronald took out the things from the hamper, ‘ye jist spoil everyone that comes near ye. Such extravagance—such waste—many’s the time I wish ye would get married, and have a man to look after ye—’

‘Stop your hawering—who would marry an auld woman like me?’ said Mrs. Menzies with a laugh. ‘Ay, and what’s the extravagance, noo, that has driven ye oot o’ your mind?’

‘Champagne again!’ the old woman said, shaking her head. ‘Champagne again! Dear me, it’s like a duke’s house—’

‘What, ye daft auld craytur! Would ye have me take my cousin Ronald for his first trip to Campsie Glen, and bring out a gill o’ whisky in a soda-water bottle?’

‘Indeed, Katie, lass, ye needna have brought one thing or the other for me,’ he said. ‘It’s a drop o’ water, and nothing else, that will serve my turn.’

‘We’ll see about that,’ she said confidently.

Her provisioning was certainly of a sumptuous nature—far more sumptuous, indeed, than the luncheons the rich Americans used to have carried down for them to the loch-side, and a perfect banquet as compared with the frugal bit of cold beef and bread that Lord Ailine and his friends allowed themselves on the hill. Then, as regards the champagne, she would take no refusal—she had to submit. She was in the gayest of moods; she laughed and joked; nay, at one point, she raised her glass aloft, and waved it round her head, and sang—

*‘O send Lewie Gordon hame,
And the lad I daurna name;
Though his back be at the wa’,
Here’s to him that’s far awa’!’*

‘What, what, lass?’ Ronald cried, grimly. ‘Are ye thinking ye’re in a Highland glen? Do ye think it was frae places like this that the lads were called out to follow Prince Charlie?’

‘I carena—I carena!’ she said—for what had trivial details of history to do with a jovial pic-nic in Campsie Glen? ‘Come,

Ronald, lad, tune up! Hang the Harmony Club!—give us a song in the open air!’

‘Here goes, then’——

*‘It was about the Martinmas time,
And a gay time it was then, O,
That our guidwife had puddins to mak,
And she boiled them in the pan, O’*

—and then rang out the chorus, even the old Mother Paterson joining in with a feeble treble—

*‘O the barrin o’ our door, weel, weel, weel,
And the barrin o’ our door, weel!’*

‘Your health and song, Ronald!’ she cried, when he had finished—or rather when they all had finished. ‘Man, if there was just a laddie here wi’ a fiddle or a penny whistle, I’d get up and dance a Highland Schottische wi’ ye—auld as I am!’

After luncheon, they set out for further explorations (having deposited the basket in a secret place) and always Kate Menzies’ laugh was the loudest, her jokes the merriest.

‘Auld, say ye?’ Mother Paterson complained. ‘A lassie—a very lassie! Ye can skip about like a twa-year-old colt.’

By and bye they made their devious and difficult way down the glen again; and they had tea at the inn; and then they set out to drive back to Glasgow—and there was much singing the while. That is, up to a certain point; for this easy homeward drive, as it turned out, was destined to be suddenly and sharply stopped short, and that in a way that might have produced serious consequences. They were bowling merrily along, taking very little heed of anything on either side of them, when, as it chanced, a small boy who had gone into a field to recover a kite that had dropped there, came up unobserved behind the hedge, and threw the kite over, preparatory to his struggling through himself. The sudden appearance of this white thing startled the cob; it swerved to the other side of the road, hesitated and was like to rear, and then getting an incautious cut from Kate’s whip, away it tore, along the highway, getting completely the mastery of her. Ronald got up behind.

‘Give me the reins, lass,’ he called to her.

‘I’ll manage him—the stupid beast!’ she said—with her teeth shut firm.

But all her pulling seemed to make no impression on the animal—nay, the trap was now swaying and jolting about in a most ominous manner.

'If ye meet anything, we're done for, Kate—run the wheel into the hedge.'

It was excellent advice, if it could have been properly followed; but unluckily, just at the very moment when, with all her might and main, she twisted the head of the cob to the side of the road, there happened to be a deep ditch there. Over the whole thing went—Ronald and Mrs. Menzies being pitched clean into the hedge; Mother Paterson, not hanging on so well, being actually deposited on the other side, but in a gradual fashion. Oddly enough, the cob, with one or two pawings of his forefeet, got on to the road again, and the trap righted itself; while a farm-lad who had been coming along ran to the beast's head and held him. As it turned out, there was no harm done at all.

But that, at first, was apparently not Kate Menzies' impression.

'Ronald, Ronald,' she cried, and she clung to him frantically, 'I'm dying—I'm dying—kiss me!'

He had got a grip of her, and was getting her on to her feet again.

'There's nothing the matter wi' ye, woman,' he said, with unnecessary roughness.

'Ronald, Ronald—I'm hurt—I'm dying—kiss me!' she cried, and she would have fallen away from him, but that he gathered her up, and set her upright on the road.

'There's nothing the matter wi' ye—what? tumbling into a hawthorn hedge?—pull yourself together, woman! It's old Mother Paterson that may have been hurt.'

He left her unceremoniously—to get over to the other side of the hedge; and as he went off, she darted a look of anger—of violent rage, even—towards him, which happily he did not see. Moreover, she had to calm herself; the farm-lad was looking on. And when at length Mother Paterson—who was merely terrified, and was quite uninjured—was hoisted over or through the hedge, and they all prepared to resume their seats in the trap, Kate Menzies was apparently quite collected and mistress of herself, though her face was somewhat pale, and her manner was distinctly reserved and cold. She gave the lad a couple of shillings; got up and took the reins; waited until the others were seated; and then drove away—without a word. Mother Paterson was loud in her thankfulness over such a providential escape; she had only had her wrists scratched slightly.

Ronald was sensible of her silence, though he could not well guess the cause of it. Perhaps the fright had sobered down her high

spirits; at all events, she was now more circumspect with her driving; and, as her attention was so much devoted to the cob, it was not for him to interfere. As they drew near Glasgow, however, she relaxed the cold severity of her manner, and made a few observations; and when they came in sight of St. Rollox, she even condescended to ask him whether he would not go on with them to the tavern and have some supper with them as usual.

'I ought to go back to my work,' said he, 'and that's the truth. But it would be a glum ending for such an unusual holiday as this.'

'Your prospects are not so very certain,' said Kate, who could talk excellent English when she chose, and kept her broad Scotch for familiar or affectionate intercourse. 'An hour or two one way or the other is not likely to make much difference.'

'I am beginning to think that myself,' he said, rather gloomily. And then, with a touch of remorse for the depressing speech she had made, she tried to cheer him a little; and, in fact, insisted on his going on with them. She even quoted a couplet from his own song to him—

*An hour or twa 'twill do nae harm,
The dints o' fortune to forget*

—and she said that, after the long drive, he ought to have a famous appetite for supper, and that there would be a good story to tell about their being shot into a hawthorn hedge, supposing that the skipper and Laidlaw and Jaap came in in the evening.

Nevertheless, all during the evening there was a certain restraint in her manner. Altogether gone was her profuse friendship and her pride in East Lothian, although she remained as hospitable as ever. Sometimes she regarded him sharply, as if trying to make out something. On his part, he thought she was probably a little tired after the fatigues of the day; perhaps, also, he preferred her quieter manner.

Then again, when the '*drei Gesellen*' came in, there was a little less hilarity than usual; and contrary to her wont, she did not press them to stay when they proposed to adjourn to the club. Ronald, who had been vaguely resolving not to go near that haunt for some time to come, found that that was the alternative to his returning to his solitary lodging and his books at a comparatively early hour of the evening. Doubtless he should have conquered his repugnance to this latter course; but the temptation—after a long day of pleasure-making—to finish up the last hour or so in the society of these good fellows was great. He went to the Harmony Club; and was made more welcome

than ever; and somehow in the excitement of the moment, he was induced to sing another song—and there were more people than ever claiming his acquaintance, and challenging him to have ‘another one.’

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE DOWNWARD WAY.

WITH a fatal certainty he was going from bad to worse; and there was no one to warn him; and if any one had warned him, probably he would not have cared. Life had come to be for him a hopeless and useless thing. His own instinct had answered true, when the American was urging him to go and cast himself into the eager strife of the world, and press forward to the universal goal of wealth and ease and independence. ‘I’d rather be “where the dun deer lie,”’ he had said. Kingsley’s poem had taken firm root in his mind, simply because it found natural soil there.

*‘Nor I wadna be a clerk, mither, to bide aye ben,
Scrabbling over the sheets o’ parchment with a weary, weary pen;
Looking through the lang stane windows at a narrow strip o’ sky,
Like a laverock in a withy cage, until I pine away and die.*

*Ye’ll bury me ’twixt the brae and the burn, in a glen far away,
Where I may hear the heathcock crawl and the great harts bray;
And gin my ghaist can walk, mither, I’ll go glowering at the sky,
The livelong night on the black hill sides where the dun deer lie.’*

His way of existence up there on the far hill sides—unlike that of the luckless outlaw—had been a perfectly happy and contented one. His sound common sense had put away from him that craving for fame which has rendered so miserable the lives of many rustic verse-writers; he was proud of his occupation, grateful to the good friends around him, and always in excellent health and spirits. Another thing has to be said—to pacify the worthy folk who imagine that ambition must necessarily fill the mind of youth: had he come away from that sphere of careless content with a sufficient aim to strive for, perhaps affairs might have gone differently. If it could have been said to him: ‘Fight your way to the worldly success that the Americans have so liberally prophesied for you; and then come back, and you will find Meenie Douglas awaiting you; and you shall win her and

wear her, as the rose and crown of your life, in spite of all the Stuarts of Glengask'—then the little room in Port Dundas Road would no longer have been so grey; and all the future would have been filled with light and hope; and the struggle, however arduous and long, would have been glad enough. But with no such hope; with increasing doubts as to his ultimate success; and with a more dangerously increasing indifference as to whether he should ever reach that success, the temptations of the passing hour became irresistibly strong. And he became feebler to resist them. He did not care. After all, these gay evenings at the Harmony Club were something to look forward to during the long dull days; with a full glass and a good-going pipe and a roaring chorus the hours passed; and then from time to time there was the honour and glory of hearing one of his own songs sung. He was a great figure at these gatherings now; that kind of fame at least had come to him, and come to him unsought; and there were not wanting a sufficiency of rather muddle-headed creatures who declared that he was fit to rank with very distinguished names indeed in the noble roll-call of Scotland's poets; and who, unfortunately, were only too eager to prove the faith that was in them by asking him to drink at their expense.

In this rhyming direction there was one very curious point: when he began to turn over the various pieces that might be made available for Mr. Jaap, he was himself astonished to find how little melody there was in them. Whatever little musical faculty he had seemed to be all locked up in the love-verses he had written about Meenie. Many of the fragments had other qualities—homely common sense; patriotism; a great affection for dumb animals; here and there sometimes a touch of humour or pathos; but somehow they did not *sing*. It is true that the following piece—

SHOUTHER TO SHOUTHER.

*From Hudson's Bay to the Rio Grand',
The Scot is ever a rover;
In New South Wales and in Newfoundland,
And all the wide world over;*

*Chorus: But it's shouter to shouter, my bonnie lads,
And let every Scot be a brither;
And we'll work as we can, and we'll win if we can,
For the sake of our auld Scotch mither.*

*She's a puir auld wife, wi' little to give ;
And she's rather stint o' caressing ;
But she's shown us how honest lives we may live,
And she's sent us out wi' her blessing.*

Chorus : And it's shouther to shouther, &c.

*Her land's no rich ; and her crops are slim ;
And I winna say much for the weather ;
But she's given us legs that can gaily clim'
Up the slopes o' the blossoming heather.*

Chorus : And it's shouther to shouther, &c.

*And she's given us hearts that, whatever they say
(And I trow that we might be better),
There's one sair fault they never will hae—
Our mither, we'll never forget her !*

*Chorus : And it's shouther to shouther, my bonnie lads,
And let every Scot be a brither ;
And we'll work as we can, and we'll win if we can,
For the sake of our auld Scotch mither !*

—this piece had attained a great success at the Harmony Club ; but that was merely because Mr. Jaap had managed to write for it an effective air, that could be easily caught up and sung in chorus : in itself there was no simple, natural 'lilt' whatever. And then, again, in his epistolary rhymes to friends and acquaintances (alas ! that was all over now) there were many obvious qualities, but certainly not the lyrical one. Here, for example, are some verses he had sent in former days to a certain Johnnie Pringle, living at Tongue, who had had his eye on a young lass down Loch Loyal way :

*O Johnnie, leave the lass alane ;
Her mother has but that one wean ;
For a' the others have been ta'en,
As weel ye ken, Johnnie.*

*'Tis true her bonnie een would rive
The heart o' any man alive ;
And in the husry¹ she would thrive—
I grant ye that, Johnnie.*

¹ husry—housewifery.

WHITE HEATHER.

*But wad ye tak awa the lass,
I tell ye what would come to pass,
The mother soon would hae the grass
Boon her auld head, Johnnie.*

*They've got some gear, and bit o' land
That well would bear another hand ;
Come down frae Tongue, and take your stand
By Loyal's side, Johnnie !*

*Ye'd herd a bit, and work the farm,
And keep the widow-wife frae harm ;
And wha would keep ye snug and warm
In winter-time, Johnnie ?—*

*The lass hersel—that I'll be sworn !
And bonnier creature ne'er was born :
Come down the strath the morrow's morn,
Your best foot first, Johnnie !*

Well, there may be wise and friendly counsel in verses such as these ; but they do not lend themselves readily to the musician who would adapt them for concert-purposes. No ; all such lyrical faculty as he possessed had been given in one direction. And yet not for one moment was he tempted to show Mr. Jaap any of those little love-lyrics that he had written about Meenie—those careless verses that seemed to sing themselves, as it were, and that were all about summer mornings, and red and white roses, and the carolling of birds, and the whispering of Clebrig's streams. Meenie's praises to be sung at the Harmony Club ?—he could as soon have imagined herself singing there.

One wet and miserable afternoon old Peter Jaap was passing through St. Enoch Square when, much to his satisfaction, he ran against the big skipper, who had just come out of the railway-station.

'Hallo, Captain,' said the little old man, 'back already ?'

'Just up frae Greenock ; and precious glad to be ashore again, I can tell ye,' said Captain McTaggart. 'That *Mary Jane* 'll be my grave, mark my words ; I never get as far south as the Mull o' Galloway without wondering whether I'll ever see Ailsa Craig or the Tail o' the Bank again. Well, here I am this time ; and I was gaun doon to hae a glass on the strength o't—to the widow's—'

'We'll gang in some other place,' Mr. Jaap said. 'I want to hae a word wi' ye about that young fellow Strang.'

They easily discovered another howf ; and soon they were left

by themselves in a little compartment, two big tumblers of ale before them.

'Ay, and what's the matter wi' him?' said the skipper.

'I dinna rightly ken,' the little old musician said, 'but something is. Ye see, I'm feared the lad has no muckle siller—'

'It's a common complaint, Peter!' the skipper said, with a laugh.

'Ay; but ye see, the maist o' us hae some way o' leevin. That's no the case wi' Ronald. He came to Glasgow, as I understand it, wi' a sma' bit nest-egg: and he's been leevin on that ever since—every penny coming out o' his capital, and never a penny being added. That's enough to make a young fellow anxious.'

'Ay?'

'But there's mair than that. He's a proud kind o' chiel. It's just wonderfu' the way that Mrs. Menzies humours him, and pretends this and that so he'll no be at any expense; and when they gang out driving she takes things wi' her—and a lot o' that kind o' way o' working; but a' the same there's sma' expenses that canna be avoided, and deil a bit—she says—will he let her pay. And the sma' things maun be great things to him, if he's eating into his nest-egg in that way.'

'It's easy getting out o' that difficulty,' said the big skipper, who was of a less sympathetic nature than the old musician. 'What for does he no stay at hame? He doesna need to gang driving wi' her unless he likes.'

'It's no easy getting away frae Mrs. Menzies,' the old man said, shrewdly, 'if she has a mind to take ye wi' her. And she hersel' sees that he canna afford to spend money even on little things; and yet she's feared to say anything to him. Man, dinna ye mind when she wanted him to take a room in the house?—what was that but that she meant him to have his board free? But no—the deevil has got some o' the Hielan pride in him; she was just feared to say anything mair about it. And at the club, too, it's no every one he'll drink wi', though there's plenty ready to stand Sam, now that Ronald is kent as a writer o' poetry. Not that but wi' ithers he's ower free—ay, confound him, he's getting the reputation o' a harum-scarum deil—if he takes a liking to a man, he'll gang off wi' him and his neighbours for the time being, and goodness knows when or where they'll stop. A bottle o' whisky in their pocket, and off they'll make; I heard the other week o' him and some o' them finding themselves at daybreak in Helensburgh—naught would do the deevil the night before but that he maun hae a sniff o' the saut sea-air;

and off they set, him and them, the lang night through, until the daylight found them staring across to Roseneath and Kempoch Point. He's no in the best o' hands, that's the fact. If he would but marry the widow—'

'What would Jimmy Laidlaw say to that?' the skipper said, with a loud laugh.

'Jimmy Laidlaw? He hasna the ghost o' a chance so long as this young fellow's about. Kate's just daft about him; but he's no inclined that way, I can see—unless hunger should tame him. Weel, McTaggart, I dinna like to see the lad being led away to the mischief. He's got into ill hands. If it's the want o' a settled way o' leevin that's worrying him, and driving him to gang wild and reckless at times, something should be done. I'm an auld man now; I've seen ower many young fellows like that gang to auld Harry; and I like this lad—I'm no going to stand by and look on without a word.'

'Ay, and what would ye hiv me dae, Peter? Take him as a hand on board the *Mary Jane*.'

'Na, na. The lad maun gang on wi' his surveying and that kind o' thing—though he seems less and less to think there'll be any solid outcome frae it. But what think ye o' this? There's Mr. Jackson paying they professionals from week to week; and here's a fellow wi' a finer natural voice than any o' them—if it had but a little training; even as it is, the club likes to hear him better than any o' them, when he can be eggid on to gieing them a song. Well, now, why shouldna Jackson pay the lad for his singing?'

'Not if he can get it for nothing, Peter!'

'But he canna—that's just the thing, man,' retorted the other. 'It's only when Ronald has had a glass and is in the humour that he'll sing anything. Why shouldna he be engaged like the others? It would be a stand-by. It would take up none o' his time. And it might make him a wee thing steadier if he kent he had to sing every night.'

'Very well, then, ask Tom Jackson about it,' the big skipper said. 'Ye may say it would please the members—I'll back ye up wi' that. Confound him, I didna ken the deevil had got his leg ower the traces.'

The old man answered with a cautious smile:

'Ye're rough and ready, McTaggart; but that'll no do. Ronald's a camstrairy chiel. There's Hielan blood in his veins; and ye never ken when his pride is gaun to bleeze oot and be up the lum wi'm in a fluff.'

‘Beggars canna be choosers, my good freen—’

‘Beggars? They Hielan folk are never beggars; they’ll rob and plunder ye, and fling ye ower a hedge, and rifle your pockets, but deil a bit o’ them ’ll beg. Na, na; we’ll have to contrive some roundabout way to see how he’ll take it. But I’ll speak to Jackson; now that I’ve seen you it’ll be no jist o’ my ain doing; and we’ll contrive something, I doubtna. Sae finish up your beer, Captain; and if ye’re gaun doon to see Mrs. Menzies, I’ll gang as far wi’ ye; I havena been there this nicht or twa.’

Now that was an amiable and benevolent but, as it turned out, most unfortunate design. That same night Ronald did show up at the Harmony Club; and there was a little more than usual of hilarity and good fellowship over the return of the skipper from the perils of the deep. Laidlaw was there, too; and he also had been acquainted with the way in which they meant to approach Ronald, to see whether he could not be induced to sing regularly at these musical meetings, for a stipulated payment.

Their first difficulty was to get him to sing at all; and for a long time he was good-humouredly obdurate, and they let him alone. But later on in the evening, one of his own songs was sung—‘*The fisher lads are bound for hame*’—and was received with immense applause, which naturally pleased him; and then there was a good deal of talking and laughing and conviviality; in the midst of which the skipper called to him—

‘Now, Ronald, lad, tune up; I havena heard a song frae ye this three weeks and mair; man, if I had a voice like yours wouldna I give them—’

‘*The boat rocks at the pier o’ Leith,
Fu’ loud the wind blows frae the ferry;
The ship rides by the Berwick Law,
And I maun leave my bonnie Mary!*’

—and indeed he did, in this loud and general hum, sing these lines, in tones resembling the sharpening of a rusty saw.

‘Very well, then,’ Ronald said. ‘But I’ll sing it where I am—once there’s quietness. I’m not going up on that platform.’

Of course, the chairman was glad enough to make the announcement, for Ronald’s singing was highly appreciated by the members; moreover there was a little experiment to be tried. So peace was restored; the accompanist struck a few notes; and Ronald, with a little indecision at first, but afterwards with a clear-ringing courage, sang that gayest of all parting-songs. In the hubbub of applause that followed none but the conspirators

saw what now took place. The chairman called a waiter, and spoke a few words to him in an undertone; the waiter went over to the table where Ronald was sitting and handed him a small package; and then Ronald naturally thinking that this was merely a written message or something of the kind, opened the folded piece of white paper.

There was a message, it is true—‘with T. Jackson’s compliments.’ And there was also a sovereign, and a shilling. For an instant Ronald regarded this thing with a kind of bewilderment; and then his eyes blazed; the money was dashed on to the ground; and, without a word or a look to any one in the place, he had clapped on his hat and stalked to the door, his mouth firm shut, his lips pale. This glass-door was a private door leading to an outer passage formerly described; the handle seemed stiff or awkward; so by main force he drove it before him, and the door swinging back into the lobby, smashed its glass panels against the wall. The ‘breenge’—for there is no other word—caused by this violent departure was tremendous; and the three conspirators could only sit and look at each other.

‘The fat’s in the fire now,’ said the skipper.

‘I wonder if the guinea’ll pay for the broken glass,’ said Jimmy Laidlaw.

But it was the little old musician, whose scheme this had been, who was most concerned.

‘We’ll have to get hold o’ the lad and pacify him,’ said he. ‘The Hielan deevil! But if he doesna come back here, he’ll get among a worse lot than we are—we’ll have to get hold o’ him, Captain, and bring him to his senses.’

Well, in the end—after a day or two—Ronald was pacified; and he did go back to the club; and resumed his relations with the friends and acquaintances he had formed there. And that was how it came about that Meenie’s married sister—who happened to know certain members of the Rev. Andrew Strang’s congregation, and who was very curious to discover why it was that Meenie betrayed such a singular interest in this mere gamekeeper, and was repeatedly referring to him in her correspondence—added this postscript to a letter which she was sending to Inver-Mudal:

‘I don’t know whether it may interest you to hear that Ronald Strang, Mr. Strang’s brother, whom you have several times asked about, is *drinking himself to death*, and that in the lowest of low company.’

(To be continued.)

Garrick's Acting as seen in his own time.

IT is a statement often made, sometimes by way of not unjust regret, or even complaint, that the actor's art is of so evanescent a kind that when he has left the stage, when his momentary triumphs—triumphs as great while they last as those that greet a general home from victory—are over, when his genius and skill no longer compel the listening and watching crowd to hang on his words, then of all the pomp and splendour of applause and success nothing remains but the mere shadow of a name. He was a great actor, some will tell you, either from witness or hearing, with a sigh of regret for his departure, while others will use the memory of his feats to depreciate the efforts of all who follow after him. Something there is, as has been said, in this contention that the acting vanishes with the actor; but it is not by any means all true. Many skilful hands have recorded in vivid description in what particular fashion the Garrick of to-day has acted this and that part, and the work has been, in some instances, so carefully and lovingly done that the dramatic student of the future can scarce fail to get some clear idea of the actor's conception, method, and manner. By some assuredly not unskilful hands the same thing was done more than a century ago for David Garrick, and it is chiefly to the doing of it that this paper is devoted. We may take for an instance his Hamlet, as described by the German critic Lichtenberg, who wrote to his friend Boie from England in October 1775.

He has much that is interesting to say before this of Garrick generally, and of Garrick in other special parts, but I must now be content with briefly indicating that he describes Garrick as a model of strength and grace, as at once distinguished from the actors around him by the intense life of his look, movement, and gesture, and as compelling as if by magnetic force the sympathy of his audience with every passing assumed mood of his own.

'Now, my dear B., if, after what I have told you, you have been able to picture a Garrick to yourself, follow me with him in

one or two scenes. To-day, because I am somewhat in the humour for it, I will take the one out of *Hamlet* where the Ghost appears to him. You know this scene already from Mr. Partridge's excellent description in Fielding. My description will not make the other superfluous, but only explain it.

'Hamlet appears in black attire, the only one, alas, which is still worn in the whole court, for his poor father, who has been scarcely dead a couple of months. Horatio and Marcellus accompany him in uniform. They await the Ghost. Hamlet has folded his arms and pulled his hat over his eyes. It is a cold night, and just twelve o'clock. The theatre is darkened, and the whole audience as still and the faces as motionless as if they had been painted on the walls of the house. At the extreme end of the theatre one might have heard a pin drop. Suddenly as Hamlet goes rather far up the stage somewhat to the left, with his back to the audience, Horatio starts. "Look, my lord, it comes," says he, pointing to the right where the Ghost is standing immovable, ere one is even aware of it. At these words Garrick turns suddenly round, and at the same moment staggers back two or three paces with trembling knees, his hat falls to the ground, both arms—especially the left—are nearly extended to the full, the hand as high as the head, the right arm more bent and the hand lower, the fingers spread out and the mouth open. There he remains standing, with legs far apart, but still in a graceful attitude, as if electrified, supported by his friends. His features express such horror that I felt a repeated shudder pass over me before he began to speak. The almost appalling silence of the assembly, which preceded this scene and made one feel scarcely safe in one's seat, probably contributed not a little to the effect. At last he speaks, not with the beginning but with the end of a breath, and says in a trembling voice, "Angels and ministers of grace defend us," words which complete whatever may yet be wanting in this scene to make it one of the sublimest and most terrifying of which, perhaps, the stage is capable. The Ghost beckons him; then you should see him, with his eyes still fixed upon the Ghost, while yet speaking to his friends, break loose from them, although they warn him not to follow, and hold him fast. But at last, his patience exhausted, he faces them, and with great violence tears himself away, and, with a swiftness which makes one shudder, draws his sword on them, saying, "By heavens, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me." Then, turning to the Ghost, he holds his

sword out: "Go on; I'll follow thee;" and the Ghost moves off. Hamlet remains standing still, his sword extended before him, to gain more distance; and when the audience have lost sight of the Ghost, he begins to follow him slowly, at times stopping, and then going on again, but always with his sword extended, his eyes fixed on the Ghost, with dishevelled hair and breathless, until he, too, is lost behind the scenes. You may easily imagine what loud applause accompanies this exit. It begins as soon as the Ghost moves off, and lasts until Hamlet likewise disappears.'

In a second letter Lichtenberg continues:—

'In the fine soliloquy, "O that this too too solid flesh would melt," &c., Garrick is completely overpowered by the tears of just grief for a virtuous father, for whom a frivolous mother no longer wears mourning, nor even feels grief, at a time when every parasite of the court should still be wearing black—the most unrestrained of all tears, perhaps because they are the only alleviation which in such a struggle between one duty and another duty an honest heart can procure. Of the words, "so excellent a king," the last word is quite inaudible; you only perceive it by the motion of the mouth, which closes immediately afterwards firmly, and trembling with agitation, as if to repress with his lips the only too clear indication of the grief which might unman him. This way of shedding tears, which shows the whole burden of inward grief, as well as the manly soul suffering under it, carries one irresistibly away. At the end of the soliloquy he mixes just anger with his grief; and once, when he strikes out violently with his arm to give emphasis to a word in his indignation, the word (to the surprise of the audience) remains unuttered, choked by emotion, and only follows after a few seconds, when tears begin to flow. My neighbour and I, who had not yet exchanged a word, looked at each other and spoke. It was irresistible.'

As to the celebrated soliloquy, 'To be or not to be,' &c.:

'Hamlet, who, as I have already reminded you, is in mourning, appears here with thick, loosened hair, some of it hanging over one shoulder, he having already begun to play the madman; one of his black stockings is half-way down his leg, showing the white understocking, and a noose of red garter hangs down the middle of the calf. Thus attired, he steps slowly forward in deep thought, supporting his chin with his right hand, and the elbow of the right with the left, looking on one side on the ground in a dignified

manner. Here, taking his right hand away from his chin, but, if I mistake not, still holding it supported by the left, he utters the words "To be or not to be" softly; but they are everywhere audible, on account of the great stillness, and not through the peculiar gift of the man, as some of the papers state.

'I must here make a little observation on the text. In the fourth line of this soliloquy some propose reading "against assailing troubles" instead of "against a sea of troubles," because arms cannot be taken against a sea. Mr. Garrick nevertheless says, "against a sea of troubles."

'The graveyard scene is suppressed at Drury Lane. At Covent Garden it is still kept. This suppression Garrick should not have introduced. Such a splendid old piece, with all its fine characteristic raw strength, would still in these mealy-mouthed times, when even the language of nature begins to give way to conventional babble, have broken the fall of it even if it had not been able to uphold it.

'I must pass over some of the most beautiful scenes, among others that in which he instructs the actors, as well as that in which he thunders into his mother's heart the comparison between his uncle and his father when the Ghost appears; one blow upon another before one has yet recovered.'

As to Garrick's treatment of Hamlet, the well-known Tom Davies has these passages, the first one relating to Hamlet's first sight of the Ghost:

'Taylor,' Davies writes, 'was the original performer of Hamlet, and his excellences in that character were so remarkable that from the remembrance of them Sir William Davenant taught Betterton a lesson which gained him universal and lasting reputation. His manner of address to the vision is recorded by Cibber in language so lively and terms so apposite that the reader will not be displeased to see them quoted here.' Accordingly Davies quotes:—He opened the scene with a pause of mute amazement; then rising slowly to a solemn trembling voice, he made the Ghost equally terrible to the spectator and to himself; and in the descriptive part of the natural emotions which the ghastly vision gave him, the boldness of his expostulations was still governed by decency; manly but not raving, his voice never rising to that seeming outrage or wild defiance of what he naturally revered.—'And in this manner our late admirable Roscius (that is, Garrick) addressed the vision. Mr. Macklin, whose judgment merits the utmost deference, differs in his opinion respecting the behaviour of

Hamlet to the Ghost from Betterton and Garrick. With pleasure I have heard him recite the speech of Hamlet to the Ghost, which he did with much force and energy. After the short ejaculation of

Angels and ministers of grace defend us !

he endeavoured to conquer that fear and terror into which he was naturally thrown by the first sight of the vision, and uttered the remainder of the address calmly but respectfully and with a firm tone of voice, as from one who had subdued his timidity and apprehension. Mr. Henderson, a most judicious actor and accurate speaker, seems to have embraced a method not unlike that of Mr. Macklin.' How far tradition may be permitted to govern in this question I will not say, but Downe, the stage-historian, in his peculiar phrase, informs us 'that Mr. Betterton took every particle of Hamlet from Sir William Davenant, who had seen Taylor, who was taught by Mr. Shakspeare himself.'

One very singular piece of business used by Garrick we learn from an anonymous correspondent and admirer of Garrick, who wrote to him, dating Dublin, Aug. 12, 1742, and said, amongst other things, this:—

'I went the other night to see you perform the part of Hamlet, and do indeed think that you got a great deal of deserved applause. I doubt whether the famous Betterton did the part half so well the first time he attempted it. The character of Hamlet is no small test of a man's genius where the action is inconsiderable and the sentiment so prevailing and remarkable through the whole. I own that upon your first encounter with the Ghost I observed with some astonishment that it was a considerable time before you spoke. I beg of you, sir, to consider that these words

Angels and ministers of grace defend us !

follow upon the first surprise, and are the immediate effects of it. I grant you that a little pause after that is highly proper; but to repeat them at the same time and in the same tone of voice with the speech

Be thou a spirit of health ?

is very improper, because they are by no means a part of that speech. You certainly kept the audience in a strange suspense, many of whom I suppose were afraid, as well as I, that you wanted the assistance of the prompter. There is one thing that I must

mention which I think has but a very ridiculous appearance, although it has been practised by everyone that I have seen in that character, and it is this: when the Ghost beckons Hamlet to follow him, he, enraged at Horatio for detaining him, draws his sword, and in that manner follows the Ghost; presently he returns, Hamlet still following him sword in hand, till the Ghost says,

I am thy father's spirit !

at which words Hamlet, with a very respectful bow, sheathes his sword, which is as much as to say that if he had not been a ghost upon whom he could depend he dared not have ventured to put up his sword.'

As to Garrick's treatment of Polonius, Davies has some remarks which will now seem more curious than true. He begins by trying to make out that Polonius was a mere doddering fool, and supports this view by 'the constant practice of the stage, from the revival of *Hamlet* soon after the Restoration, to this day' (1764) 'to assign Polonius to a low comedian.' Then he says: 'About five-and-twenty years since, Mr. Garrick had formed a notion that the character of Polonius had been mistaken and misrepresented by the players, and that he was not designed by the author to excite laughter and be an object of ridicule. He imagined, I suppose, with his friend Dr. Johnson, that his (Polonius's) false reasoning and false wit were mere accidents in character, and that his leading feature was dotage encroaching upon wisdom, which, by the bye, is no object of theatrical satire and far from being, what is averred by the great commentator, a noble design in the author. Full of this opinion, Mr. Garrick persuaded Woodward on his benefit night to put himself in the part of Polonius. And what was the consequence?—The character, divested of his ridiculous vivacity, appeared to the audience flat and insipid. His dress was very different from what the part generally wore; the habit was grave and rich cloth of scarlet and gold. Whether this was in imitation of some statesman of the times I will not be positive, though I have heard it so asserted. So little was the audience pleased with Woodward, or Woodward with himself, that he never after attempted Polonius.'

Of Hamlet's speech at the end of the second act, of which the last words are

The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

Davies writes:—‘Here it must be owned that Garrick rose superior to all competition (the competition refers especially to Spranger Barry and to Wilks). His self-expostulations and upbraidings of cowardice and pusillanimity were strongly pointed and blended with marks of contemptuous indignation. The description of his uncle held up at once a portrait of horror and derision. When he closed his strong paintings with the epithet “*kindless villain*,” a tear of anguish gave a most pathetic softness to the whole passionate ebullition. One strong feature of Hamlet’s character is filial piety; this Garrick preserved through the part. By restoring a few lines which preceding Hamlets had omitted, he gave a vigour as well as connection to the various members of the soliloquy. It is impossible to forget the more than common attention of the audience, which his action and change of voice commanded when he pronounced

I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play,

and the following lines to the end of the act.’ As to the ‘To be or not to be’ speech, Davies’s remarks on Garrick must perforce be taken with what he says of Wilks and Barry. ‘Wilks,’ he writes, ‘spoke his soliloquy with a pleasing melancholy of countenance and grave despondency of action. He was less skilful in the utterance of sentiment than passion. His greatest fault in deportment proceeded from his aptness to move or shift his ground. It was said of him by a sour critic, that he could never stand still. This fault he could never entirely free himself from, though often put in mind of it.

‘Barry, not having middle tones in his voice, could not give the requisite grave energy to sentiment, he was therefore obliged in some situations of character, to raise his powers of speech above their ordinary tone. Garrick, by an expressive countenance and flexible voice, gave full force to this meditation on futurity, which he pursued through all their progress with exquisite judgment and address.’

We come now to the scene with Ophelia, ending with ‘to a nunnery go.’ On this Davies has some very odd observations. ‘The assumed madness,’ he writes, ‘with Ophelia, was, by Garrick, in my opinion, made too boisterous. He should have remembered that he was reasoning with a young lady to whom he had professed the tenderness of passion. Wilks retained enough of disguised madness, but at the same time preserved the feelings of

a lover and the delicacy of a gentleman. Barry was not so violent as Garrick, and was consequently nearer to the intention of the author. Sheridan, Smith, and Henderson, have all in this scene avoided a manner too outrageous.' Of the instructions to the players, Davies writes:—'I have always considered the advice of Hamlet to the players as Shakspeare's legacy of love to his fellows the comedians, such he called them in his lifetime and such he termed some of them in his will. Wilks, I believe, never spoke it; and I conjecture it was omitted from the death of Betterton till the good taste of Garrick revived it. . . . In giving instructions to his own society, there is some delicacy required in the behaviour of the actor, who, in the person of a Prince, takes upon him to censure and reform their errors. Mr. Garrick delivered these theatrical precepts with much force and propriety, but he did not accompany them with the condescending quality expected from the high-bred man of rank; he rather sustained the office of a stage-manager and consummate master of the art, than that of the generous friend and princely monitor. Mr. Henderson has in this scene less of the pedagogue and more of the gentleman.'

Presently we find a note on the lines

For some must laugh, while some must weep,
Thus runs the world away.

which is curious in itself, and will seem particularly curious to those who remember or who have read of Macready's treatment of the same lines. 'In the uttering of this line and a half, it was Garrick's constant practice to pull out a white handkerchief, and twirl it round with vehemence. This action can incur no just censure except from its constant repetition.' Here the author goes on to make a remark, the full discussion of which would lead too far from the present purpose—but it is worth quoting, as it is curiously in opposition to the theory of acting which has been laid down by Diderot and other masters of criticism, and has been warmly attacked by some who have at least an equal right to be heard. 'Garrick,' says Davies, 'of all the players I ever saw, gave the greatest variety to action and deportment; nor could I help wondering that so great an artist should in this instance tie himself down to one particular mode, when his situation would admit of so many. This conforming to an uniform method of action makes the whole appear a lesson got by rote rather than the effort of genuine feeling.' Another point equally curious in its

way is noted by Davies as to Hamlet's speech while the King is at his prayers. 'The first actor,' he says, 'who rejected this horrid soliloquy was Mr. Garrick.' This, however, Garrick did not always do, for the same anonymous correspondent, before referred to, wrote to him, dating Dublin, August 14, 1742, to complain of his leaving out on this occasion the directions to the players, adding this: 'I wish that instead of it you would omit that abominable soliloquy, that is such a terrible blot and stain to a character, that, were it not for that, would be complete; I mean that part where Hamlet comes in with a resolution to kill his uncle, but, finding him at his prayers, he says he will not do it, lest he should do him a piece of service and send him to heaven. . . . All this is so cruel and detestable that I wish it had never come into Shakspeare's thoughts to make it a part of the character.' Of the same speech, Johnson wrote:—'This speech, in which Hamlet, represented as a virtuous character, is not content with taking blood for blood but contrives damnation for the man he would punish, is too horrible to be read or to be uttered.'

To none of these commentators did it occur that Hamlet might be really fastening on an excuse for delaying the accomplishment of his almost blunted purpose.¹

Of the scene with the Queen after the play, Davies notes justly, but without mentioning Garrick by name, that the kicking down of the chair on the Ghost's appearance is a poor stage trick, and later on says that in this scene Garrick 'had an ample field to display that fine expression of countenance, energy of speech, and warmth of passion for which he was so justly admired. To argumentative reproof he gave full vigour, nor was he deficient in those filial regards which a son should feel for a mother unhappily misled. His address to the Ghost was reverentially awful, as well as transcendently moving. His eye, marked with grief and filial love, pursued the melancholy shade to his exit. His recovery from that situation was characteristically striking, and his final exhortation to his mother ardent and pathetic.' Here is added a remark which seems again to some extent to bear out Walpole's criticism ('nor could he be a gentleman. His Lord Hastings and Lord Townley were mean'). 'Except in the delicacy of address

¹ In the same way it has not occurred to other commentators that Hamlet's speech to Osric, Act v., sc. 2: 'Sir, his defilement suffers no perdition in you, &c.,' owes the difficulties they have found in understanding it solely to the fact that Hamlet embellishes his really simple and obvious meaning with certain flourishes to mock the unconscious Osric.

to a lady, in which Wilks and Barry excelled all mortals, Garrick was in this scene a most perfect Hamlet.'

To go back for a moment, it is interesting to note that in the business of the portraits of the two brothers, Garrick, as had been the constant practice of the stage ever since the Restoration, produced from his own pocket two pictures in little. Davies, not noting the unlikelihood of Hamlet's carrying about his uncle's miniature, whether for the express purpose of this scene or in order to pull it out habitually and rail at it at leisure, does note that he cannot conceive how the graceful attitude of a man could be given in a miniature. He suggests that there should be two full-length portraits on the wall. He had not arrived at the humorous excuse made by our present day Garrick, that, with no visible pictures, those of the audience who dislike the notion of the portraits being entirely air-drawn, might conceive them to be hung on the invisible fourth wall of the Queen's room.

To conclude with Davies's observations on Garrick's Hamlet, he remarks thus upon the great actor's stage version of the play: 'Mr. Garrick, about eight or nine years since, offered the public an amendment of Shakspeare's *Hamlet*. The respect which the public owed to so eminent a genius disposed them to receive his alterations favourably. The first act, which in my opinion the author's genius carries on with wonderful rapidity, he had observed was immoderately long; for this reason he divided it into two, the first ending with Hamlet's determined resolution to watch with Horatio and Marcellus in expectation of seeing the ghost of his father. In consequence of this arrangement, the old third act was extended to the fourth. Little or no change in language or scenery was attempted till the fifth act, in which Laertes arrives and Ophelia is distracted, as in the old play. The plotting scenes between the King and Laertes to destroy Hamlet were entirely changed, and the character of Laertes rendered more estimable.'

This version of *Hamlet* Garrick did not publish, as he did his versions of other old plays by Shakspeare and other authors, among his own dramatic works, and in this it may be judged that on the whole he did wisely. He might have done as wisely perhaps if he had not published certain other travesties of Shakspeare which he produced. There is his *Romeo and Juliet*, to take one instance. As to this, Murphy tells us that 'Garrick saw that the catastrophe might be made more affecting than it was in the original play, which he knew was founded on an

Italian novel written by Bandello. . . . The catastrophe, as it now stands,' Murphy proceeds later on to say, 'is the most affecting in the old compass of the drama.' This is how Garrick arranged the catastrophe. After the fight with Paris in the last act, many lines are cut, and after the words 'here's to my love,' with which Romeo drinks the poison, this is inserted :—

Eyes, look your last ;

Arms, take your last embrace ; and lips, do you

The doors of breath seal with a righteous kiss !

Soft—she breathes—she stirs. (*Juliet wakes.*)

Jul. Where am I ? Defend me !

Rom. She speaks, she lives—and we shall still be blest ;

My kind propitious stars o'erpay me now

For all my sorrows past—rise, rise, my Juliet,

And from this cave of death, this house of horror,

Quick let me snatch thee to thy Romeo's arms,

There breathe a vital spirit in thy lips,

And call thee back to life and love. (*Takes her hand.*)

Jul. Bless me ! how cold it is ! who's there ?

Rom. Thy husband—

'Tis thy Romeo, Juliet ; rais'd from despair

To joy unutt'able ; quit, quit this place

And let us fly together. (*Brings her from the tomb.*)

Jul. Why do you force me so ? I'll ne'er consent,

My strength may fail me, but my will's unmoved—

I'll not wed Paris—Romeo is my husband.

Rom. Her senses are unsettled—heav'n restore 'em,

Romeo is thy husband—I am that Romeo,

Nor all the opposing pow'rs of earth or man

Shall break our bonds or tear thee from my heart.

So the scene goes on until Romeo says :—

Fate brought me to this place to take a last,

Last farewell of my love, and with thee die.

Jul. Die ?—was the Friar false ?

Rom. I know not that ;

I thought thee dead ; distracted at the sight

(Fatal speed), drank poison, kiss'd thy cold lips,

And found within thy arms a precious grave ;

But in that moment—oh !

Jul. And did I wake for this ?

Rom. My powers are blasted,

'Twixt death and life I'm torn, I'm distracted !

But death's strongest—and must I leave thee, Juliet ?

Oh cruel, cursed fate ! in sight of heav'n.

Jul. Thou rav'st—lean on my breast.

Rom. Fathers have flinty hearts—no tears can melt 'em.
Nature pleads in vain—children must be wretched.

Jul. Oh, my breaking heart!

Rom. She is my wife—our hearts are twin'd together.
Capulet forbear—Paris, loose your hold,
Pull not our heartstrings thus—they crack—they break—
Oh, Juliet, Juliet. (*Dies.*)

Then Juliet faints on Romeo's body and presently afterwards dies, stabbing herself with his dagger, and condescending to speak Shakspeare's words,

Oh happy dagger,
This is thy sheath, there rust and let me die!

but that for 'rust' she substitutes 'rest.'

One knows not which to admire the more, the happy inspiration of this improvement on Shakspeare, or the exquisite treatment of the blank verse in which it is conveyed. But when all is said in this sense it is to be remembered that Garrick, like other great men, could not be entirely free of the faults of taste that belonged to his time, and that he did rid the stage of many such faults, notably in the case of *Macbeth*, which so astonished Quin when he heard Garrick speaking Shakspeare's lines, and of which the great Mrs. Pritchard is reported to have known not a line beyond her own part in the prompter's copy.

Concerning *Macbeth* there is one thing noted by Murphy regarding Garrick's conception of the murder scene, which may be worth attention, and that is that he played it, and with approval, as a representation of complete terror. 'When Garrick,' says Murphy, 're-entered the scene with the bloody dagger in his hand, he was absolutely scared out of his senses; he looked like a ghastly spectacle, and his complexion grew whiter every moment, till at length, his conscience stung and pierced to the quick, he said in a tone of wild despair

. . . . This my hand will rather
The multitudinous sea incarnadine,
Making the green—one red.'

It seems that for some time Garrick adopted the vicious reading, 'making the green one—red.' Murphy claims the honour of having been the first to support the better reading.

This may not be an inconvenient place for pointing out that Garrick, like every other actor who has risen to the topmost place,

was accused of, and no doubt had, what we call mannerisms, and that he seems to have had some odd tricks in his elocution. These are pointed out by the excellent Dublin correspondent, of August, 1742, to whom if Garrick had had any clue to his address, he would, no doubt, in pursuance of his constant and courteous custom, have sent an answer. 'The first thing I shall mention,' writes the correspondent (and which I insist upon that you reform), 'is your false pronounciation of several words, which can be owing to nothing but custom and prejudice in a man of sense, as I am sure you are. In your last performance I took notice of several false pronounciations, many of which I have forgotten. The words that I chiefly remember are these: *matron*, *Israel*, *villain*, *appal*, *Horatio*, *wind*; which you pronounced *metron*, *Iserel*, *villin*, *appeal*, *Horetio*, and the word *wind* you pronounced short. I cannot imagine what your objection can be to the letter *a*, that you should change it into an *e*, both in the English language and the Latin; or what fault you can find with the English word *matron* that you should be obliged to make it Greek. Does not *Horatio* sound much better than the little word *Horetio*. It is said that Horatius Cocles when he could no longer withstand the fury of his enemies, leaped into the Tiber. But what did he this for? Was it not for a name? Yes, surely, but never for the name of *Horetius*.'

Thus history, the history of the theatrical stage, as of the great world stage, repeats itself, and we find critics less kindly perhaps than this one of Garrick's, dwelling with no less truth it may be, if with less justice, upon the shortcomings in the pronounciation of Garrick's successor in our own days.

I have said, and record suggests the assertion, that every actor of the highest mark has had mannerisms which could be detected. But these mannerisms do not prevent a man from being not only a great actor (as a tragedian of limited powers may be a great actor in some half-dozen parts of the same calibre), these mannerisms, I say, do not prevent a man from being not only a great actor in one line of part, but also a great impersonator—a brilliant painter of living portraits of varying kinds. And here in Garrick's case may be found a proof of this in comparing what has been quoted about his peculiar speech with what the Rev. T. Newton wrote to him in 1741: 'I have not had an opportunity before of writing to you to tell you how highly I was pleased with your acting of King Lear, and it is not only my opinion, but several good judges I know, and particularly one of

the Masters of Westminster School, and one of the Chief Clerks in the Treasury, say that you far exceed Booth in that character, and even equal Betterton. The thing that strikes me above all others is that variety in your acting, and your being so totally a different man in Lear from what you are in Richard. There is a sameness in every other actor, Cibber is something of a coxcomb in everything, and Wolsey, and Syphax, and Iago, all smell strong of the essence of Lord Foppington. Booth was a philosopher in Cato, and was a philosopher in everything else. His passion in Hotspur and Lear was much of the same nature, whereas yours was an old man's passion and an old man's voice and action; and in the four parts wherein I have seen you, Richard, Chamont, Bayes, and Lear, I never saw four actors more different from one another than you are from yourself.'

Here we have, dating back to nearly a century and a half ago, one of many testimonies to the truth that individuality is not necessarily a synonym for sameness or monotony in any art. It is not so, as we know, in painting, it is not so in music, it is not so in writing, it is not so in sculpture; why should it be so in the one art which must trust to its sister arts for perpetuation, the art of acting?

The question is perhaps needless, but it seems worth while to put it at a time when the revival both of acting and criticism (which naturally react upon each other) is as yet young in this country, and when in consequence of that very youth there is a certain confusion and crowding of newly-born or newly-re-born ideas—when, in short, one hears it constantly said, 'Mr. So-and-so may be a very great, or a very clever actor, but then he is always Mr. So-and-so.' Precisely. Would he be a very great or very clever actor, or a very great or very clever follower of any of the other arts, if he were *not* always Mr. So-and-so? It is his individuality that has made us feel his talent or his genius, or both, and when he loses that individuality, then it will be time for him to leave whatever art he professes and follows. An artist of any kind who has nothing but individuality is doomed to comparative failure. An artist of any kind who has everything but individuality is doomed in a like way. Out of being nothing but yourself, nothing can come; out of being everything but yourself, nothing can come. Genius and the highest talent, two terms on the distinction between which we need not now dwell, hit the just mean and deservedly command in varying degrees success and admiration.

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK.

Too Soon.

Too soon, too soon !
 For but last month was lusty June
 With life at swinging flood of tide ;
 Nor seems it long since May went by
 With Love and Hope at either side ;
 And now 'tis only late July,
 And yet, alas, methinks I hear—

Too soon, too soon—
 Death whisper in the fading trees ;
 And when the sun's red light is gone,
 And Night unfolds her mysteries,
 With failing heart almost I fear
 In garden plots remote and lone
 To find the dreadful Shadow near—

Too soon, too soon !

GEORGE MILNER.

Eulalie.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'MRS. JERNINGHAM'S JOURNAL.'

CHAPTER I.

TWO girls stood together at a window, hand in hand. They both of them performed the duty of girls in being pretty. One of them was tall and slight, with dark eyes and smoothly braided hair, which only escaped from being black by the burnished light upon it. Her features were classic and statuesque, and she looked like the stuff out of which a heroine (not of a novel) might be made. The other was petite in all ways, and the very embodiment of childlike innocence. Her figure was prettily rounded, her feet and hands small, yet the latter dimpled and rosy as a babe's, her gold-flaxen hair, refusing to lie on her head, waved and frizzed itself out into the most charming excrescences; her eyes, blue as the skies, or as the loveliest colour on a china plate, or as a forget-me-not, or any other symbol and essence of blueness, were saucy, cloudless, and passionless as when they shone in the face of a little six years old maiden; her nose with that slight tendency to the *retroussée* which is irresistible; her mouth like a cherry, and her complexion milk and roses.

It was raining slightly, but it may be that the woods and the mountains that were to be seen from the window looked all the prettier through the soft mist. It was at Spa, in the Hôtel Splendide.

These two girls were not relations or even friends in the usual acceptation of the word. They were travellers coming in different directions, who met by chance only two days before; but as they immediately discovered that they were kindred spirits—of course, as they had never met before, they had a great deal to say to each other.

The dark-eyed heroine was the daughter of a country clergyman, and the two were travelling together in that happy manner common to English fathers and daughters. She had the bearing

of a woman of the world, and could talk of its trials and temptations uncommonly well. She considered herself old at twenty, yet in reality she was the most inexperienced and innocent of youthful maidens.

'Ah!' she said to her new friend, 'you trusted me the first moment you saw me. You are so young, dear. I would give a good deal to be as young and fresh as you are.'

'And did you not trust me?' replied the other, with a little glance of tender reproach in her blue eyes.

'You?—yes,' laughed Rhoda Gray; 'I should think I trusted you! Why, you child, anyone would doubt a baby as soon as you. The reason why I love you is because you are such a new, innocent little darling,' and she stooped lovingly and kissed the sweet child-face turned up towards her.

The pretty dimpled hand stroked her cheek.

'And you are a queen,' the child said. 'You know everything. You know that world into which I have never been. Oh, it must be grand to be you!'

Rhoda shook her head gravely.

'I don't know,' she said with a sorrowful accent; 'it is not so grand after all. One loses as much as one gains by that knowledge of the world, Eulalie.'

For, to add to all the pretty child's other charms, her name was Eulalie.

'But you said you were to tell me something this evening—a great, great secret. Oh, Rhoda, be quick! I love secrets, and no one ever told me one.'

'Well, you know we expect a friend to-night; and he is some one who—he—in fact—— Ah, Eulalie! did you ever hear of lovers, and of people being engaged to one another?'

Eulalie clapped her hands in glee.

'Yes, yes,' she cried, 'I have *heard* of such things, but seen them—never! Do you mean it, Rhoda? Do you really mean it? Is it your LOVER that is coming? Shall I actually know an ENGAGED COUPLE?'

Rhoda sighed wistfully, and looked with sad admiration at her friend, as she laughed, dancing round her and clapping her hands.

'Ah, that freshness!' she murmured. 'And I am accustomed to everything and know all about it. Yes, dear, I am engaged.'

'What is he like? Who is he? Is he handsome? Is he nice? Is he your father's Curate?'

'No, he is not my father's Curate. I sometimes wish he was.

I should like to spend my life in sweet country places, the wife of a man who had taken on himself the service of God. A clergyman's wife is so safe. All her duties are laid out for her; she is circled round by them.'

'Ah, yes, it would be sweet—sweet,' said the admiring listener, and her blue eyes swam with innocent joy at the picture.

'But Mr. Woodford lives in London,' continued Rhoda. 'He is a barrister; he is of good family; he has large private means; and being,' with a little air of pride, 'remarkably clever, he makes a fortune by his profession. So it is a very different life from what I should covet, you see, Eulalie. A large house in Eaton Square, and the daily round of a woman of fashion.'

'And what is his christian name?' asked little Eulalie.

'Ah, you child,' sighed the woman. 'All these advantages pass by you like the idle wind that you regard not, and you only think of his name. It is not a bad name. It is Vere.'

'Oh yes; Vere Woodford is a delightful name.'

Rhoda's father entered the room. He was a fine-looking man of not more than forty-five years of age, having, like most clergymen, married earlier in life than he had any right to do, but not, like most gentlemen of that profession, surrounded himself with a dozen mouths to feed, for the young wife had died in giving birth to the first baby, and for the sake of his two Rhodas Mr. Gray had never taken to himself another wife. He looked very kindly at the girls, but his eyes rested perhaps longest and with most interest on the little child-friend his daughter had lately acquired.

'Will you mend my gloves, dear?' he said to Rhoda. 'I have left them on the table in my room; there are two big holes in them.'

'Oh, I should like to mend your gloves,' cried Eulalie, as his girl flew to obey him.

He sat down by her side, continuing to look very kindly at her.

'I shall be a lonely old fellow when that dear creature has left me.'

'Old?' cried Eulalie, in her childlike innocent astonishment. 'Oh yes; are you really old? It never seemed so. But I can't think how she can make up her mind to leave you. I am so surprised at her marrying. I can excuse unhappy girls doing so; but her life must be just the very happiest on earth. And she is going to leave it!'

'Human nature, my dear; or rather *Nature*. The birds leave

their snug little nests and parents' sheltering wing to build homes for themselves and take mates.'

'Ah, I never knew a parent's sheltering wing.' And two large tears welled out of the blue eyes and rolled down the poor child's cheeks.

'I should like to give you one,' cried he, a kindly colour stealing into his. 'At any rate, I do hope you will come home with us and stay till Rhoda is married. I am sure it will be the best thing for you.'

'How good you are! What a delicious plan! Yes, that will be a treat of treats.'

'You must write to your guardian and arrange it. You see it is impossible you can stay on here in this way. Have you heard from him since your troubles?'

'Not yet, but every post may bring me a letter.'

Poor little Eulalie's troubles had indeed been great, and she had been fortunate in falling in with such good people and kind friends as Mr. Gray and his daughter.

On the first day that they arrived at Spa, they had seen her. She had glided into the public drawing-room before dinner, and glancing round her seemed at once to see where protection was to be found, and sat timidly down on the same sofa with Rhoda. At first the girls did not speak; Rhoda thought she was waiting for her party. But when the gong sounded and everybody went in to the *table-d'hôte*, the pretty girl rose, sat down again, glanced round her, and looked ready to cry.

Nothing more bewitching or pathetic could be imagined, and Rhoda and her father were equally struck by her.

'Are you expecting anyone?' the father asked, gently.

She shook her head. 'May I sit next you?' she begged, with an innocent earnestness as if her life depended on the answer.

Both father and daughter expressed their willingness and pleasure, and during dinner-time she told them her little story.

She was the only child of an English officer who had entered the Austrian service, married a Countess, and settled abroad at an old castle belonging to his wife, where Eulalie's childhood had been spent. She spoke beautiful English, but with a slight and very attractive foreign accent. Her father had always been very particular about her English. Her childhood had been passed in the most profound retirement, and it was her utter ignorance of the world and its ways, of cities and the busy haunts of men, that took Rhoda's fancy irresistibly. Poor child; both her parents

had died, and left her in the guardianship of an uncle of her mother's, but living quite alone with the governess who had trained her. She remained at home for a year or two, seeing no one but her governess; and then, that lady's health having failed, the doctor had sent them to Aix-la-Chapelle for hot baths. This was Eulalie's first glimpse of the world, and she was quite willing to enjoy herself with childish *enjouement* when Madame Scudamore suddenly became worse and died after a few days' illness. Eulalie's grief was not profound, for her governess had not been an attaching person, but her terror was great, and the horror of the place where the event had happened overwhelmed her. Her mother had relations at Spa, and on impulse she came there—anywhere to be away from Aix, anywhere in search of kindred or friends. But, alas, the relations she had need of had long ago quitted the place, and the poor little creature found herself quite alone. What would have become of her if she had not fallen in with this kindly English clergyman and his daughter? She had written to the Baron, her guardian, as soon as Madame Scudamore died; but he was in Norway, and meantime, while awaiting his answer, she did not know where to turn or what to do.

While telling her story, and in the course of the close intercourse that followed, one or two things came out incidentally, more from what she said without thinking than from what she consciously told. One was her complete ignorance of the world, of money matters, and of how to manage her affairs—her ignorance even of there being such things as money matters, or affairs to manage. And another was, that she was extremely rich. Not only were her mother's castle and large estate hers, but an income independent of land was to be hers also.

'Three thousand pounds a year, or something or other, Madame Scudamore said I should have when I came to the right age. What could she mean by that? I quite forget what the age is; and isn't it odd to give money at one age more than another?'

But even while telling these things, the child evidently hardly understood their meaning, and did not give them a thought. This was not so much, it appeared, from a generosity of disposition or a disregard of the good things of this life, as from an ignorance as complete as if she was only eight instead of eighteen.

When her hotel bill was brought her, the day after she had made the Grays' acquaintance, by which time her friendship with Rhoda was at once tender and complete, she was bewildered and

did not know what to do with it; Madame Scudamore had arranged everything of this kind without a word to her. She had found money in her governess's desk which had brought her to Spa; and if it was necessary to give money for all these things she had no doubt she should find more if she looked for it—there had always been heaps of money for everything whenever it was wanted. Indeed her dresses were a corroboration of what she said, and showed that it was not her ignorance made her imagine riches where they did not exist, for they were numerous and much richer and handsomer than are usually worn by so young a girl. But then her mother was an Austrian Countess, and perhaps she was one too in her mother's right? No, that she was not, she declared. She was an Englishwoman. Her father had always impressed that on her. She was Miss Fairfax.

When she looked over the bill with Mr. Gray and Rhoda, she was amused and a little put out.

'It seems rather mean charging for every scrap of food one eats—dinner, luncheon, breakfast—all put down. And look here, even a cup of tea I had the first evening I came! How odd; is not it?'

Mr. Gray gravely explained to her that at hotels, just as in shops, no one would give her anything without receiving money in exchange for it. But while he made his grave explanations he looked at her sweet face with delighted eyes, and the corners of his mouth kept twitching with suppressed smiles. Then she ran away to fetch the money to pay for her bill.

'Is she not delicious?' demanded Rhoda of her father with enthusiasm.

'The dearest little thing I ever met,' was the equally enthusiastic reply. 'It makes one feel young again to look at her.'

She came back pretty soon to tell them that she could only find a few francs. She did not seem in the least distressed, because she really did not understand the situation; but Mr. Gray quite shivered when he thought of what trouble she might have been in if she had not come across him. However, he consoled himself with the reflection that if it had not been him it would have been somebody else. Hearts are not made of flint, and there were plenty of people in the hotel who would have protected her. He rejoiced in his luck, that had brought her to them, rather than to anyone else, the first day.

'Is it not odd there is no money, when there was always more than we could use?' she asked innocently.

‘Did she keep her boxes and bags locked?’

‘Oh no, why should she? What was the use of locking boxes and bags? That was done only to prevent things from tumbling out in the train, was it not?’

‘Well, not exactly’ (here the corners of Mr. Gray’s mouth twitched again). ‘Everybody in the world, unfortunately, was not quite honest, and it was better to lock money up, for fear it might be stolen.’

‘Oh!’ The blue eyes opened very widely at this. That had never occurred to her, and she would take care in future. Did he think all her money had been stolen? Then Mr. Gray asked if Madame Scudamore was in the habit of drawing cheques, and did she know who their banker was? But cheques and bankers were quite beyond Eulalie Fairfax. She had never heard of either. So Mr. Gray paid her bill and proposed to be her banker himself till she received funds from her guardian.

But to return to the sofa where we left the poor child sitting with her kind friend.

‘You see,’ he said, ‘we shall only be here a day or two longer. We are only waiting for Woodford to join us, who has been abroad on business, and then, after three days of sight-seeing, we all go home together. Now it would be impossible to leave you alone, and we should be so pleased if you will come back with us.’

‘I don’t see how I could live without you now,’ she replied simply. ‘It feels to me we have always been together. I can hardly believe we are only new friends.’

‘I have just the same feeling,’ he cried with eagerness, ‘and I believe in such feelings, Eulalie. They really *make* new friendships old, doing the work of time in a better way than time itself can. I always *had* faith in them.’ Had you, Mr. Gray? Never mind, for you certainly *think* you had. ‘And indeed I hope we never shall—I do not see why we ever should—separate, lose sight of each other.’ He stammered and hesitated a little.

‘Oh, would it not be nice for me to live with you when Rhoda is married?’ she asked with great joy in her face, as the thought suddenly struck her. ‘I could mend your gloves then, you know,’ she added simply.

He looked very earnestly at her and coloured very deeply as he did so.

‘I have thought of that too,’ he said with a certain dryness of manner,

'Then let me do it,' she cried, clapping her hands in that pretty childish way of hers.

'When Rhoda is married,' he said thoughtfully. 'Were you ever at a marriage, Eulalie?'

'At a marriage—a wedding? Oh no. I have never been at anything, you know. Rhoda's will be the first.'

'And perhaps your own will be the second?'

'Mine? Oh no, please not; please do not say so. I must never marry—never at all. How can I live with you if I do? and I want to do nothing but that. Oh, I am so happy in the thought! Why do you take it from me? But perhaps,' suddenly, 'you will marry yourself, and then you will not want me.'

'But, my dear child, I am too old to marry, am I not?'

'Are you old? You say so, but I can't think it. Certainly not too old to marry—why should you be? What do you mean? Oh, I am so very much afraid you will marry and not want me.'

'You think I shall marry some staid, sensible, middle-aged woman. Perhaps *she* might take me. What I mean is that I am too old for a girl to care for me, Eulalie.'

He looked inquiringly and anxiously at her and spoke his words slowly, with little pauses between the adjectives he applied to his possible bride.

To his amazement, she burst out crying.

'I can't bear that staid, sensible, middle-aged woman,' she sobbed. 'I hate her.'

What could he do? His arm, unused to such caresses, that for twenty years had only encircled a daughter's waist, stole round hers. He drew her to him.

'Eulalie,' he whispered, 'could you love me? Will you marry me?'

He knew he was precipitate. He called himself an old fool. Four days ago he had never seen the child. How could he expect that in her heart as well as his a revolution of all existing things had been worked since then? He knew she would refuse him, but what could he do?

She did not refuse him. She leaned back on his supporting arm, and stared amazed in his face. Then she seemed to read the story there, and with a little cry of joy hid her own on his breast. Yes, the cry was of joy, and he felt that she loved him.

CHAPTER II.

THEY had a little delightful talk together after that. Mr. Gray felt like a new man, and saw a new life before him, as rose-coloured as that on which he had entered in his youth, but which on its very threshold had been overcast with gloom. He had waked a woman's heart in the sweet childish form which leant so confidently against him. He had waked a woman's love in the dearest, truest, purest little heart in the world. He felt a sort of holy triumph. Presently the child sprang to her feet.

'I must go and tell Rhoda!' she cried, and was just running away, but he caught her dress in his hand and detained her.

'Not yet; not quite yet,' he said, with a little shamefaced look.

'Ah, why not? She will be so glad.'

'Wait a day or two, my dear. She would hardly understand my speaking to you so soon.'

'Was it too soon?' said the child, rather piteously.

'No, no; not that—I don't mean that. But I will tell her myself. I will prepare her first for my marrying at all. She has not an idea of it. I will lead up to it. Do not tell her to-day, Eulalie.'

'I have a favour to ask you,' said she. 'I will do all you wish, and you will do one thing for me?'

'I will do anything in the world for you, my darling.'

'Then let us start for England to-morrow. The terror of Madame Scudamore's death is still on me. It haunts me here, and I think it will haunt me till I am in England. Will you take me home to-morrow?'

It was so sweet to him to hear her call it home.

'I will, if I possibly can, to-morrow, or next day at furthest. Woodford will be here in an hour or two, and then we will talk over the plans, and I will hurry them as much as I possibly can.'

His colour rose when he mentioned Woodford's name, and he added quickly: 'And about speaking of our engagement, my dear Eulalie, you must leave it to me. I will tell Rhoda and Woodford myself. But I am not sure that it will not be better to wait till after we have dropped him in London and *we* are in Somersetshire; and then I can tell him by letter,' he added; but this was addressed to himself, not to her, and with a little air of relief.

Eulalie consented to everything, though it was evident that in her childish innocence and ignorance of the world she did not in

the least understand his wish to defer communicating his engagement to his grown-up daughter and future son-in-law, so that he might at least be supposed to have had time to become acquainted with the disposition and character of his betrothed, and not to have been caught only by a pretty face, 'which I was not,' he said stoutly to himself. 'It was the disposition and character *in* the face that caught me. But people are so stupid or so satirical, that they won't believe that.'

Eulalie went upstairs to prepare for the *table-d'hôte*. When dressed she ran into her friend's room. How sweet and pretty she was. She tripped up to her, and throwing her arms round her, kissed her.

'You dear Rhoda!' she cried, 'how beautiful you look! Ready for your lover!' Then she suddenly burst out into a gay, ringing laugh, 'Only think if I was your mamma!'

'My mamma!' cried Rhoda astonished. 'You foolish little child, you!'

And she kissed her affectionately, without the least suspicion of the meaning of what the girl said. Eulalie appeared to Rhoda a hundred years younger than herself. *She* might have been her mother, or grandmother for that matter, but certainly not Eulalie hers. And the idea of her reverend and respected father marrying the innocent little creature never crossed her mind for an instant. Rhoda would not have objected to her father marrying when she left him. She was a good, unselfish girl, and would have rejoiced at anything that made him happy; but if such an idea had ever occurred to her, which it had not, she would no doubt have fixed on some staid, middle-aged, sensible woman for the second Mrs. Gray. As to her father falling in love with a pretty face, and marrying a child out of the nursery, such a profane notion had never even troubled her dreams, much less her waking moments.

Mr. Woodford did not arrive by the train by which he was expected, but he made his appearance by the next. Eulalie left her friend to receive him, discreetly keeping upstairs in her own room.

After a lovers' *tête-à-tête* had been enjoyed, Mr. Gray, as discreet as Eulalie, joined them, and then Mr. Woodford explained the reason of his delay. There had been an accident on the line, by which his train had been detained.

'Indeed,' he said, 'I should not have got on at all if there had not been a Government detective travelling by the same train,

and as his progress was important, herculean efforts were made to clear the line.

Mr. Woodford had been visiting St. Petersburg, and it was from that city that he and this Government detective had, fortunately for his three days' visit at Spa, happened to travel together.

'You have read in the papers a curious history of the murder of a man by his wife, I dare say,' he continued; 'and they have reason to suspect that the wife is no less a person than the celebrated Therese Scobeliske, who has been "wanted" for some time, you know.'

'Is that the political spy who attempted the Duc de G——'s life?' asked Rhoda.

'Yes, the same, if you know what you mean by a political spy,' laughed Vere Woodford, looking fondly at her. 'It is rather a vague term, is it not?'

'I want you both to agree to a little alteration in our plans,' said Mr. Gray, naturally preoccupied, and breaking suddenly into the conversation with a complete change of subject. 'Would you mind starting for England to-morrow?'

'Why, papa?' exclaimed Rhoda, 'when we came here on purpose to meet Vere!'

'Yes, really this is rather amazing,' said Mr. Woodford, feeling at once astonished and ill-used. 'You know my business *must* keep me here three days; and we settled how it was all to be, and you were so kind as to take a holiday and bring Rhoda to meet me, and——'

'And we have planned delightful excursions for every one of the three days, you know!' cried Rhoda; 'and only this morning you were arranging it all, and engaged a carriage. Why, you wicked, wonderful old father, what can you mean?'

Mr. Gray looked as he felt—awkward. His future son-in-law's keen eye was upon him, and the elegant question occurred to that gentleman's mind, 'What's up?'

'Well, I suppose we must stay then,' Mr. Gray said, in an uncomfortable manner.

'I really suppose we must,' laughed Rhoda. 'I think the old gentleman has been dreaming, don't you, Vere?'

Mr. Gray winced at the words 'the old gentleman.' He was a fine-looking man of not more than forty-five years of age, so that he need not have minded his daughter applying such an appellation to him in jest; but under the peculiar circumstances he did.

Rhoda happening to move into the window at that moment, Mr. Woodford instantly asked him in a low voice if he was quite well, which made him more uncomfortable still.

'Of course I am,' he answered pettishly. 'What on earth makes you ask?'

'Only your desire to start for home immediately. I was afraid perhaps you were not well, and wanted advice, or to be at home.'

'And so set off on a long journey because I was ill;' and Mr. Gray laughed inanely.

Vere Woodford stared at him, greatly astonished. The two men had known each other for years, and the younger one had never seen the elder like this before.

'I wonder why Eulalie does not come down,' said Rhoda. 'Did you see her, papa, since Vere arrived?'

'No,' replied her father, very sheepishly, 'I did not.'

'Who is Eulalie?' asked Mr. Woodford. He happened to address the question to Mr. Gray, not to Rhoda.

'She is a lady staying here,' he said; and he grew scarlet as he said it.

Vere Woodford thought to himself, 'Gray is not well; I am convinced he is not well, though he will not allow it. He wants to go home; his manner is irritable, and he changes colour like a girl. What can be the matter with the dear old fellow?'

'The idea of calling Eulalie a lady!' laughed Rhoda.

'Is she a peasant or a servant, then?' asked Vere.

'Oh dear, no; she is in our rank of life, but she is only a child—the dearest, sweetest, prettiest little creature you ever saw; so innocent and babyish I can hardly keep from kissing her little face whenever it comes near me; and she is deserted and alone. Such a sad story, Vere; and we have taken her under our wing, and she is to come home with us and stay a bit.'

Then Rhoda, with warmth and enthusiasm, narrated poor little Eulalie's history, and Vere Woodford listened with interest and rejoiced that the child had fallen into such good hands, and met with friends to be kind to her; and while they talked, and she told and he listened and made remarks, Mr. Gray sat by conscious and embarrassed, and said never a word. His interview with Eulalie was beginning to seem very strange to him. It assumed a sort of dream-like appearance in his eyes, standing by itself, and, as it seemed to him now, with nothing to lead to it, or to follow from it. What a fool Vere Woodford would think

him if he knew he had engaged himself to marry this child, who, in Rhoda's description, might be almost a baby, after three days' acquaintance. And he really had done this. *Was* he a fool?

While he was asking himself this agreeable question Eulalie entered the room, and his heart sprang up to meet her, as Wordsworth informs us his did when it beheld a rainbow in the sky. And why should it not, according to Wordsworth's own reasoning, which goes far to prove that if a man may fall in love in youth, so may he in age also.

So was it when my days began,
So is it now I am a man,
So may it be when I grow old.

The little thing entered; with no apparent consciousness that there was a private understanding between her and Mr. Gray. He would have been glad to be equally unembarrassed, and to have felt his eyes as transparent and his brow as careless as hers. What a lovely little child she was, as she tripped daintily on her tiny feet at once to Rhoda's side, as if for safety and protection. The kind elder friend took her hands in hers while she introduced her to her lover.

Eulalie raised her childlike, china-blue eyes to Vere Woodford's face and dropped him a charming little curtsy, and he, rising from his seat, bowed; but as by so doing he obtained a full view of her, he almost started and he almost changed colour. He was too much of a lawyer to do either entirely, but an unmistakable wave of involuntary emotion passed over his clever face, which was unaccustomed to express any feeling except in accordance with its owner's will.

Rhoda, whose eyes no doubt were sharpened by love, some instinct beyond all question, conveying knowledge from one soul to another when true love knits them together, Rhoda, alone of his three companions perceived this, and a great surprise rose up within her as to what it meant.

Whatever caused it and whatever it meant, it was gone almost as rapidly as it came, and Mr. Woodford was quite himself again, and politely making conversation for the youthful stranger.

Still Rhoda wondered what was the meaning of this extraordinary amount of emotion that had evidently (to her) been aroused in him by the sight of her friend. The impression left on her mind was that he had for an instant received some sudden shock. She had heard of love at first sight, and had not Vere

Woodford been her own true knight she might have thought he had fallen in love at first sight with the pretty Eulalie. This, of course, under the circumstances, did not occur to her; but had Rhoda known that the innocent beauty of the child had not only stolen the heart, but an offer of marriage also, from her respected, respectable, clerical, twenty-years widower and forty-five-year-old father, she might have feared that they had come across one of those sirens whom no man can resist, and felt a shivering doubt of even Vere Woodford's constancy. But happily for Rhoda, she was as yet ignorant of the engagement between her father and her friend.

Her thoughts flitted rapidly through her mind, drawing off her attention from what was being said, but when she began to listen again she found nothing beyond small talk going on.

'Have you been here any time, Miss Fairfax?' Mr. Woodford was saying. 'Do you like Spa?'

'Oh, only a few days,' replied the little thing. 'They know—they will tell you. I was in grief, and they were so kind.'

'And she is coming home with us now,' Rhoda said, smiling kindly on her. 'She is English, but she has never been in England.'

'We are going to-morrow,' said Eulalie, like a continuation of her friend's speech, a little smile dimpling her pretty chin.

'No, no; not to-morrow. To-day is Monday, my dear, and we don't start till Thursday. Don't you remember all the pleasant excursions we have been planning?' Rhoda said, surprised.

'*I thought* we were going to-morrow,' repeated Eulalie; and there was a slight accent of reproach in the way in which she said the word 'thought.'

Rhoda's nature was too noble to be suspicious, and the fine instinct of love not being at work here, it did not occur to her to connect Eulalie's notion with her father's proposal. She had only a vague idea that everybody seemed confused about their departure.

But Mr. Woodford, startled and surprised, directed a keen glance towards Mr. Gray, which showed him that that gentleman was again colouring highly, while he muttered as if addressing nobody in particular, 'It is not possible to arrange it.'

There was a moment's silence, and then Rhoda, suddenly catching the meaning of his remark after it had been uttered, said gaily, 'I should think not, indeed. I don't know what you are dreaming about, good people!'

'Is it not strange to think that I was in St. Petersburg only two days ago?' cried Woodford, giving a great yawn and addressing the words to Miss Fairfax.

Rhoda had an odd, quick thought that he might just as well have said them to her; and she wondered at the way in which Mr. Woodford looked at her friend. Certainly Eulalie was uncommonly pretty, and in all probability she would not have won her own heart half so quickly but for her innocent beauty; 'and all men,' added Rhoda to herself, drawing on her worldly wisdom, 'are influenced to an extraordinary extent by "the light that lies in woman's eyes." But then, surely, to a man who had fallen in love with *her* and who admired her as Rhoda knew Vere Woodford did, such a very different style as Eulalie's ought not to be so uncommonly charming.'

Eulalie smiled a pretty response to his remark, and said innocently: 'St. Petersburg, dear me! Is not that an im-mense way off?'

The little girl spoke as if she was not quite sure of her geography, and also as if the idea of great immense distances was more than her mind had strength to entertain, altogether in a childish, fascinating little manner.

'To think how everybody has travelled but me,' she said; 'and I have never taken but one journey in my whole life.'

'From St. Petersburg to Spa,' began he, slowly.

'What, I?' and her gay child-laugh rang out as she spoke.

'You are dreaming, Vere!' remarked Rhoda.

'I beg your pardon, I was not referring to Miss Fairfax at all. I was on the point of being instructive, and of informing you of the number of miles that lie between St. Petersburg and Spa.'

'Oh, pray go on. We are all listening.'

He shook his head.

'No,' he said, 'I never can be instructive when I am interrupted. That is over for to-night. But I will tell you what,' he added, suddenly, 'I have learned palmistry since I saw you last. I have—let me see—yes, I have consorted with gipsies. I can tell fortunes. Show me your hand, Rhoda.'

He caught her hand in his, and studied the lines on it with profound attention.

'A happy marriage,' he read from it as if from a book. 'A long life, friends, riches, everything the heart of woman can desire, and a husband any woman may be proud of.'

And as Rhoda snatched her hand from him in blushing haste, he laughed at her with pleasant impertinence.

‘Now, then, Miss Fairfax, let me try yours.’

But Eulalie was a little unwilling. Some childish fear seized her. She held out her tiny hand and withdrew it again ere he could take it in his.

‘There is nothing in it, is there?’ she asked, appealing to Mr. Gray.

‘Nothing whatever, my dear,’ answered the clergyman; but he looked a little uneasy himself.

The hand was once more held out. It was naturally the right hand she extended, but Woodford asked for the other.

‘The left hand, please,’ he said. And she gave it to him.

‘But why the left hand?’ asked Rhoda; ‘it was my right hand you examined.’

‘Was it? Are you sure?’ he said, while he regarded Eulalie’s rosy palm with attention. ‘Oh yes, of course; don’t you know? The right hand with brunettes, the left with blondes,’—he gave an odd little laugh along with the ready reason—‘but your hand is so plump, Miss Fairfax, there is no reading your story at all. You will have to *bant* for a while before we can make anything of it.’

‘To *bant*?’ said the little Austrian, astonished.

‘Yes; or live on prison fare—that would do as well.’

He dropped her hand, as if tired of the trifling, and turned to Mr. Gray.

‘By the bye,’ he said, ‘is there a telegraph office in the hotel?’

‘I don’t know; I rather think not. But there is one at the railway station.’

‘Yes; well, I have to send a telegram. I will write it here, and then see about the office.’

He sat down at a side table and began to write, reflecting a good deal between each word that he put down. Rhoda came up softly and leaned on the back of his chair.

‘Who is it to, Vere?’ she whispered. ‘Some anxious friend you inform of your safe arrival? For shame, sir; you never send me telegrams.’

‘Little Curiosity,’ said he, ‘never mind now. I will tell you to-morrow.’

But though he spoke lightly, he shaded the paper so that she could not see what he wrote, and she perceived that he did so. She was not quite pleased; indeed, the evening altogether had

not yielded her all the pleasure she had expected from it. Her lover, somehow, was not like himself, not as much occupied with her as he should have been after a considerable absence.

She moved quietly away from him, and her sense of insufficiency was not diminished when, without another word to her, he finished his telegram, and jumping up said very cheerfully, 'Now we'll see about sending it off,' and left the room. He did not return till it was time to go to bed.

When the little party separated Rhoda's manner was perhaps rather cool to him, and it vexed her that she could not feel sure whether he noticed the shadow on it or not. He went to his room at the same time that the girls did to theirs, and Mr. Gray remained alone pacing up and down the apartment. He could not sleep, and bodily exercise helped to still the confusion in his mind.

The door slowly opened, and a little face with a quantity of rebellious, waving, curling hair hanging all about it peeped through, after which Eulalie stepped gently in. She wore a pale blue embroidered cashmere dressing-gown profusely trimmed with white lace. Certainly they had dressed her very handsomely in that old *château*—people of a certain rank always do wear rich clothes under any circumstances.

She tripped up to Mr. Gray, looking very charming, while the handsome robe only increased the childishness of her appearance.

'Oh,' she said, 'shall we really not go home to-morrow?'

'My dear, it is not possible,' he answered, kindly; but as he looked down on the cherub face and perfect little figure a pang like remorse shot into his heart. Was he dreaming, or had he really asked this beautiful child to be his WIFE? What should he do with her in the quiet country parsonage? Should he put her under a glass case? 'We came here on purpose to pass the three days with Woodford. He must stay till Thursday, and I don't know what I was thinking of in saying we could start without him.'

She looked so much disappointed, and her baby lip pouted and trembled as if she were about to cry. He made her sit down by him on the sofa. She nestled up to him in her innocent way, and his kind arm stole round her waist.

'Oh, please,' she said, 'could not we be married here? To-morrow, perhaps?'

He gave a great jump. She said it very much as if she was

proposing nothing more than that they should dine early instead of late, or drive to some old neighbouring ruin.

'I am so frightened,' she said simply, 'ever since my governess died; I feel so alone, and I think of her being dead and my father and my mother. And I saw her die, you know, and it haunts me. I am frightened. If I was married to you I should not be afraid any more. Could we be married to-morrow, dear?'

'My darling,' he said, 'my poor little darling, don't you feel protected in being with us? Don't you know that I would not let any harm come near you? As to being—being—married to-morrow,' he hesitated bashfully at the word, though she in her innocence had spoken it out bravely, 'I don't know whether it is possible, whether we could get anyone to—to—do it, you see. I don't know the foreign plans—or what about licences or anything.'

'It is very easy,' she began rather eagerly; but at the same moment the door opened, and Vere Woodford walked into the room.

I do not know which of the two gentlemen was most thoroughly out of countenance, but the little lady remained as serene and calm as if she had been only six years old. Mr. Gray jumped up, and Mr. Woodford said involuntarily, 'I beg your pardon.'

'Oh, it's nothing,' cried the poor clergyman, speaking in his utter confusion quite jauntily; 'we were only making plans for to-morrow.'

The girl clapped her hands gleefully.

'Oh, is it to be to-morrow, then?' she cried.

'To-morrow? Aye, to-morrow,' said Vere Woodford.

No one understood what he meant, but Mr. Gray was glad he said anything, for he expected that the next moment this unconscious child might tell his future son-in-law that he and she were to be married next day.

He lit two candles in great haste and gave one to Eulalie, while he kept the other himself.

'It is very late,' he said, 'dreadfully late. Good-night, Eulalie.'

Obediently, Eulalie said good-night and went, and he hurried after her, not allowing himself a second alone with Woodford. Then, conscious of fresh danger if the child renewed their conversation in the lobby or on the staircase, he dashed into his bedroom and locked the door.

CHAPTER III.

THE next morning broke bright and fine, and the party of four breakfasted in the public room as is the custom abroad. Three of the four were not quite like themselves. Rhoda was vexed at having been cool to Vere the night before, and would have tried to make amends to him if he had given her an opportunity of doing so, and if she could feel sure that he had noticed her coolness; and while she regretted that her manner had been unlike itself to him, she regretted yet more the haunting idea that he had not observed that it was so, which facts are not as inconsistent as they perhaps appear. Mr. Gray was dreadfully embarrassed in Woodford's presence, and in a great fright lest Eulalie should openly propose an immediate marriage, and Mr. Woodford was grave and thoughtful.

Eulalie alone appeared just as usual, free from the slightest embarrassment and without a care or regret in the world. She was the only one of the party who seemed in tune with that sweetest pleasure, when, under a summer sky, no roof covers the head from morning till night.

Even in the carriage, when Rhoda expected Vere to talk to her, she found his attention preoccupied and, as it appeared to her, fixed on her friend.

The question crossed her mind as to whether this friendship they had formed together was such a very delightful thing after all. Perhaps if Eulalie had not joined the party Vere would have been like himself and devoted to her.

But Rhoda was an amiable, sweet-natured girl, and she tried very soon to throw off her annoyance and to restore enjoyment to the party. Not knowing that there was any other reason, she accused her own stupidity and ill-temper for the *gêne* and silence that had taken possession of it.

'Papa,' she said, 'I did not tell you of the news I received in a letter this morning. Only fancy—Mr. Rashleigh is going to be married!'

'Nonsense, my dear; impossible; he can't be such an old fool!' exclaimed the foolish man on the impulse of the moment.

'Oh, but that is not half all; if he married a woman of suitable age nobody would mind, but it is quite a young girl—a schoolfellow of his daughter's.'

'Yes; but I fancy it is not true, Rhoda,' said Mr. Woodford,

'I heard the report before I left London, and Rashleigh contradicted it himself, and said it was the pure invention of a spiteful imagination. By the way, Mr. Gray, what do you say to the sort of thing? Don't you think a middle-aged widower runs a great risk and lowers himself in the estimation of his friends if he marries a young girl?'

Unhappy Mr. Gray! What *could* he say, with Eulalie's blue eyes smiling on him from the opposite seat, his daughter by her side, and his cruel son-in-law, his interlocutor, in his pocket?

He was absolutely dumb, and sat there looking like a fool, and colouring scarlet.

'Oh, we all know what papa thinks,' cried Rhoda lightly—she had not happened to look at the unhappy gentleman. 'He always said that there was too much difference between Uncle and Aunt Jones, and that is only twelve years, which I don't consider a bit too much.'

Twelve years! Yes, and he did think the difference too great. The tastes of that couple continually pulled them asunder, and he had never failed to attribute this to their ages being so far apart. Twelve years! and between him and Eulalie there must be more than twice that number—nearer thirty than twenty; and he was a widower and a clergyman, he had a grown-up daughter, and his forty-sixth birthday was close at hand.

'What *do* you think, Mr. Gray?' said Eulalie's sweet little voice. 'Rhoda answers for you, but you don't speak yourself.'

Rhoda looked very much surprised at this interposition of Eulalie's.

'Think—think,' cried he, starting as if from a reverie, and looking wildly about him. 'Why, where are we? The driver has taken the wrong road. This is not the way to S——.'

'No; but it's all right,' Mr. Woodford said quietly. 'I bade him drive to B—— instead. I thought it did not matter which day we visited the different places, so I am killing two birds with one stone. I expect some one to meet me at B——.'

And as Mr. Woodford was at Spa on business, nobody was surprised.

After this attempt of Rhoda's to make things better they became worse than ever. If it had not been impossible, she would have thought that her little bit of gossip about Mr. Rashleigh had displeased everybody; and as it *was* impossible, she began to think that the evil must lie in herself. She knew how in an attack of jaundice everything assumed to the eye of the sufferer the same yellow

tint that his own skin bore. Had she a mentally jaundiced eye? Was she going to be ill, and were mere trifles assuming an unreal importance to her while a certain sombre hue pervaded all objects? Did this mean that she was sickening with some fever? At this stage in her reflections she saw beyond any doubt a glance of intelligence exchanged between her father and Eulalie, and intercepted by one of keen inquiry, such as a detective might have given, from Vere Woodford. She shut her eyes really frightened. 'I am going mad,' she said to herself. 'It is exactly like what I have read, of people becoming insane and attributing deep meanings to everything around them. The next step will be that I shall fancy all this unreal significance is directed against *me*. I wonder are people conscious at the time that these are proofs of approaching insanity? Oh, poor things! poor things!'

And so this very unpleasant pleasure party reached its destination; and being English, of course the first thing it did was to go to the hotel and ascertain at what hour the *table-d'hôte* was to be; after which, as a secondary consideration, they went out to see whatever was to be seen.

And now to poor Rhoda's intense surprise she found that her lover took possession of Eulalie, and that she was left to walk with her father. When she discovered that this was not to be an accidental beginning of the afternoon's programme, to be easily and quickly set to rights by Vere Woodford, but that it was steadily persevered in, and as far as she could judge was not only submitted to by him, but was his own doing, she felt with some relief that the changed aspect of things did *not* exist in her own brain alone. But the relief of the discovery was only momentary, and was followed by some of the bitterest and most painful feelings that the poor girl had ever experienced in her life. She walked with her father, vainly endeavouring to keep up a conversation, towards which he gave little or no help, and after a very little while both became silent.

Meantime Vere Woodford made himself extremely agreeable to his lovely companion, who, doubtless too much of a child to care for more than the enjoyment of the moment, or notice the gravity of grown-up people, was all gaiety and lightness of heart. What should she know of lovers and their ways? How could she, in her inexperience, be aware that Vere Woodford ought to have been at Rhoda Gray's side, and had no business to be monopolising Eulalie Fairfax instead? And so throughout that long summer day one of the party was content and gay in her childlike ignorance,

while Rhoda and her father moped together. And Mr. Woodford—was he satisfied or not?

They dined at the *table-d'hôte*, and when dinner was over strolled out into the gardens that are a prominent feature in all watering-places. Mr. Woodford, almost unconsciously as far as the others were concerned, led the party, and directed their steps towards the railway station. One of the garden gates opened into the station, and as they approached it a train came in. The travellers got out, looked at their luggage, shook hands with friends who waited for them, and dispersed, one of them only approaching in their direction.

A man of middle height and quiet appearance, who came close to them, and then again Rhoda wondered if her brain was affected, as, to the best of her belief, and she did not see how she could be mistaken, she beheld a glance of private understanding exchanged between him and her lover, who, at the same instant, dropped Eulalie's arm, which had been passed through his, and left the pretty creature standing a little apart by herself.

The stranger walked straight up to her and said,

'Therese Scobeleski, I arrest you for an attempt to murder your husband.'

'An attempt!' cried the child with dismay. 'Is not he dead then?'

At which naïve remark Vere Woodford burst into an irresistible fit of laughter. What followed can better be imagined by the reader than described by the writer of this true story. Vere Woodford, attracted as lawyers are by histories of great crimes, was interested while at St. Petersburg by finding that the celebrated spy Therese Scobeleski had been for some time living there under a feigned name, her identity being discovered only when private passions interrupted the duties she was no doubt carrying on, and an attempted husband-murder at the same moment drew attention towards her, and led to her escape from justice.

Her photograph, coloured and displaying all her childlike beauties and graces, was to be seen everywhere, and had been eagerly scrutinised by him; and the first moment he saw Eulalie he recognised her as its original, with a conviction that only his legal caution prevented his taking as a fact.

But in the description given of the notorious woman a peculiar mark like a blood-red mole on the palm of her left hand had been mentioned. Hence his sudden knowledge of gipsy fortune-telling; and as soon as he saw the tell-tale palm of the

pretty hand with the conspicuous mark upon it, he sent off a telegram to his fellow-traveller from St. Petersburg, the Russian detective, desiring him to meet him next day at B——, where he would find 'her whom he looked for.'

He arranged for the arrest to take place there, rather than at the hotel, where the Grays were known, as less disagreeable for them.

Therese having with her accustomed cunning made her escape—how many times had she escaped in her life?—no doubt thought that a good chance of concealment offered itself to her should she become the wife of an English country clergyman and conceal herself in Somersetshire.

'But it is impossible!' that poor country clergyman cried, stepping forward to her defence, notwithstanding the damning evidence of her own exclamation. 'Therese Scobeleski is a middle-aged woman, and this child is not more than sixteen.'

'She is thirty-five,' replied Woodford, 'and celebrated throughout the world for her appearance of perpetual youth.'

'You are married?'—the unhappy man actually addressed the question to her in his bewilderment.

'But I *thought* he was dead,' she answered plaintively. 'He was my second husband. I *did* like my first; but I was tired of this one. It is a great disappointment.'

She spoke in her pretty little tone of childish complaint, making Mr. Gray feel as if it was somehow his fault that the second husband was not dead, even while the question flashed across him as to how she might have treated her third.

'I think,' said Mr. Woodford, addressing the remark to him pointedly, 'that it was fortunate I came to Spa from St. Petersburg.'

But that was the only comment he ever made on Mr. Gray's connection with the 'political spy.' He never asked a question or said a word even to his wife of what he witnessed that night in the hotel at Spa, and to Mr. Gray, when he had recovered from the shock, the strange episode in his life appeared like a dream, and he did not believe that he had ever in serious earnest proposed to marry the infamous Therese Scobeleski.

Transformation.

ONCE in an English woodland, where awoke
 Breezes that made the dark leaves pulse and shine,
 I walked at twilight, willing to invoke
 All moods of revery, mirthful or malign,
 When gradually on my vision broke
 A mighty and moss-hung tree that lay supine,
 Levelled by some dead tempest's evil stroke
 And clasped by coils of ivy serpentine. . . .
 If truth now tricked herself in fancy's cloak,
 If some brief elfin madness now was mine,
 Or yet if actual voices faintly spoke,
 Wandering the dusk, there stays no certain sign;
 But 'I was Merlin,' said the bearded oak,
 And 'I was Vivien,' said the snaky vine!

EDGAR FAWCETT.

La Rochefoucauld's Maxims.

THOUGH this book has been before the world for more than two hundred years it will always afford matter for thought, because men will ever be more interested in their own being than in any other. Voltaire says of it: 'One of the books which contributed the most to form the taste of the nation, and to give to it an idea of exactness and precision, was the small collection of maxims by François duc de La Rochefoucauld. Though there is scarcely more than one true saying in the book, which is that self-love is the prime mover of all our actions, yet this thought is presented to us under so many different aspects that it is nearly always engaging. This is less a book than materials wherewith to adorn a book. The little collection was eagerly read. It accustomed people to think and express their thoughts in a sharp, concise, and elegant way. This was a merit which no one possessed before La Rochefoucauld since the revival of learning.' We will say a few words as to the origin of the maxims, and then notice a few of those which show the chief indications of the author's mind.

The story of the birth of the little book is curious, and has its importance in the social history of the time. After the dispersion (1648-1650) of the circle of friends known as the Hôtel de Rambouillet, Mme. de Sablé, one of their number, received her own friends in her house in Paris, in the Place Royale. The large handsome square was then new, and it was a fashionable part of the town. There Mme. de Sablé remained for a few years, until she became touched with the Jansenist doctrines of grace. She then went to live close to the Port-Royal monastery in the Faubourg St. Jacques. Her religious opinions do not seem to have interfered much with her daily comforts, and cannot be said to have had any appreciable influence in her share of the book now under consideration. She spent much of her time upon the delicacies of her table, and did not renounce her love of good eating when she entered the monastery of Port-Royal. It was said of her: 'The devil wouldn't leave her, he hid himself in her

kitchen.' She continued to see her friends, and of these La Rochefoucauld was the chief. She was a 'précieuse' of the first quality, though she showed more of common sense in her affectation than was probably the case with many other ladies. Cousin tells us that 'une précieuse' meant simply 'une femme distinguée.' It was a word then much in vogue, for we find it used in comedies and in novels of the time. Mme. de Sablé held a 'bureau d'esprit' of her intimate friends, and maxims were manufactured in her drawing-room. A discussion was started relating to some traits in the human character, and each one present would endeavour to couch his thoughts in a terse and epigrammatic form. As has been prettily said, 'C'était une manière de parler de soi sans en avoir l'air.' This sort of amusement was at any rate then the fashion. It formed a pleasant occupation for idle people of an afternoon. The usual dinner hour was twelve o'clock; after that visits were made and returned. There were then a considerable number of ladies in Paris who had their particular days for the reception of their friends. Molière's 'Précieuses Ridicules' (1659), though, as we think, purposely intended as a caricature, is a true picture. The mock marquis when he praises his own skill in making verbal portraits, composing madrigals, turning verses, and singing his own lines, was showing to Cathos and Madelon how people of the world passed their time in good society. Maxim-making was the mode among all those who wished to be considered clever, or as living in the fashionable world, and La Rochefoucauld and Mme. de Sablé did with greater éclat what others around them were doing. Cousin is very strongly of opinion that but for the fashion then prevailing, Pascal's 'Pensées' would not have been written; and he also urges that it is extremely probable that Pascal composed many of his 'Pensées' either that they might be shown to Mme. de Sablé and her friends, or as a pleasant recollection of his having been made welcome in her house, together with his sister Mme. Périer. Mme. de Sablé herself wrote maxims; and among her friends who also wrote were Domat, the jurist, and Esprit, a member of the French Academy. But their skill was inferior to La Rochefoucauld's, their hand was less cunning than his. There are in existence a good many letters from Rochefoucauld to Mme. de Sablé, in which he sends her half a dozen or more maxims for her consideration, to be talked over when they might next see each other. When two or more people are working together at one common object, a confusion of

claims may sometimes arise, but we think La Rochefoucauld knew very well what was his own and what belonged to others, and he was a man likely to observe the distinction. He took infinite pains with his sentences. It was all-important to him that when they were given to the world they should be as perfect in their outward dress as he could make them. His own saying, '*C'est une grande habileté que de savoir cacher son habileté,*' was his motto. He would show the sentence to Mme. de Sablé, and they would consider it together, and then by constant pruning and polishing it was at last put into a presentable shape. If the expression was in the least cumbrous, inelegant, or did not carry with it its full intended meaning, he would shape it until it satisfied him. We may disapprove of the practice, but we must acknowledge that La Rochefoucauld has written with singular lucidity in the wording of his phrase. His glory as we now see it is that he has put what he wanted to say into language that is terse, expressive, and intelligible to everybody.

By degrees La Rochefoucauld's visits to Mme. de Sablé became less frequent, and their intimacy was gradually broken. In bygone days Mme. de Sablé and Mme. de Longueville had known each other at the Hôtel de Rambouillet, and the intercourse between the two ladies had again become close because of their common connection with Port-Royal; and so, perhaps, more from accident than from inclination, the friendship between La Rochefoucauld and Mme. de Sablé dwindled away until it became nearly a thing of the past. It was about this time, too, that La Rochefoucauld's intimacy with Mme. de La Fayette ripened into intimacy. With her novels we have now nothing to do; but it is believed that she lent assistance to the author of the *Maxims* in softening his ill-humour and in mitigating the asperity of some of his opinions. She said of him: '*M. de La Rochefoucauld m'a donné de l'esprit, mais j'ai réformé son cœur.*' And he in his turn used to call her '*la vraie.*'

The first edition of '*Les Maximes*' appeared in 1665; and the fifth, and last during the author's lifetime, in 1678, two years before his death. The little volume of 504 maxims took him twenty years to write and make perfect. When it first appeared it was much censured. Criticism in those days was nearly altogether verbal. A printed review—to use a word belonging to our own century—did appear, in the '*Journal des Savants.*' That was written by Mme. de Sablé, and she showed a draft of her MS. to La Rochefoucauld before it was published. But, perhaps, for

such a book as this, opinions that are given readily in the quick conversation among friends will in the end be as valid as a more elaborate judgment worked out upon paper. We are told that in general men approved of them, but that the ladies condemned them. That ladies should have condemned La Rochefoucauld is not wonderful, for he has spoken of women very harshly. It may be remarked that, with the exception of the first edition, the farther we advance in his book, we find that the greater number of maxims belong to the later editions. Most of the first three hundred belong to the first edition; a few only to the second; the next forty or fifty to the third; to the fourth edition about seventy; and to the fifth and last edition about ninety or a hundred. We think, therefore, that whatever assistance Mme. de La Fayette may have rendered is to be seen more clearly in the latter than in the first half of the book.

But, in speaking of the assistance rendered to La Rochefoucauld by the two ladies whom we have mentioned, we think their share in the business was after all not very great. The book is essentially his, and whatever honour or odium there may be attending it, belongs fairly to him. Of Mme. de Sablé we have already spoken sufficiently. The influence of Mme. de La Fayette may perhaps have softened his tone a little in some of the sentences, but in spite of her little boast we can hardly believe that when he was over sixty years of age he should have altered very much in his opinions as to the ways and manners of men. In the first half of his life he was engaged in the Fronde—a civil war contemporary with our own civil war in the middle of the seventeenth century—which was a ridiculous exhibition from first to last, because nobody knew why or for whom they were fighting. Issues were changed, and men also changed about from one side to another. It was a quarrel created by the greed and vanity of men who had been trampled under by the strong spirit of Richelieu, and kept alive more by hatred and bickerings than through any real ground for dispute. It was a war of faction, in which much of the skirmishing was carried on in lampoons and pasquinades. No one came out of it with honour, hardly with credit, and La Rochefoucauld was not likely to distinguish himself in a field where everyone else had failed. The petty meannesses shown by men of all parties took ground and rankled in his heart. It was a bad school for any man; he least of all could throw off the evil effects. In this first period of his life he made love to Mme. de Longueville—Condé's sister—until it was his interest to

do so no longer; then he turned against her. In the second period he was the courtier of polished manners in the drawing-room. Mme. de Sévigné wrote of him: 'I have never seen such an obliging man, nor one so nice in his desire to say pleasant things.' A man's nature will not alter because the outward circumstances of his life are no longer the same, though he may appear in a better light under one condition of things than under another; and in the second half of his life he may have seen the errors of his youth. A high generous feeling was not in La Rochefoucauld's nature. If a man is not loyal to the woman whose reputation he has helped to destroy, we do not believe, when the times of adventure and of intrigue shall have passed, that his friendship offered to ladies will be more than skin-deep. Cousin may have been over-partial in favour of Mme. de Longueville, for it is not likely that all the wrongs were on the side of La Rochefoucauld; but, as regards the Fronde, she allowed herself to become a tool in his hands. Shortly after Molière wrote his '*Misanthrope*,' it was said by some that Mme. de Longueville was meant as the original of Célimène, and that Alceste was intended to show the Duc de Montausier. But we are not aware that anyone said La Rochefoucauld was like Alceste. *Misanthrope* as he was, how unlike is he to Molière's hero! Alceste is a creature of the imagination, if you will, but he is a real man; the portrait, though drawn in strong colours, is a true picture. He is obstinate, rough-mannered, he boils over in his rage, but he is never cynical. Instead, he is warm-hearted, and is loyal to the woman he loves, though she is false to him. La Rochefoucauld reminds us rather of Philinte, Alceste's friend, a poor soulless devil, without heart to love or hate a human creature.

La Rochefoucauld says, as a word of warning: 'The best thing the reader can do is to get into his mind that there is not one of these maxims that applies specially to himself, and that though their meaning is general, he alone is not included. If he can do so much, I will warrant that he will be the first to subscribe to them.' This savours very strongly of the pharisaical doctrine, and would teach us to think that we are better than our neighbours. It reminds us of those who—

Compound for sins they are inclined to
By damning those they have no mind to.

This may be the way of many. It may be our own way too. But none will gain immunity from their sins by pointing to those

of others. The often-quoted maxim, 'Dans l'adversité de nos meilleurs amis nous trouvons souvent quelque chose qui ne nous déplaît pas,' was suppressed, but its place was supplied by another, 'La ruine du prochain plaît aux amis et aux ennemis.' Here is another in the same tone—'Nous nous consolons aisément des disgrâces de nos amis lorsqu'elles servent à signaler notre tendresse pour eux.' We cannot help ourselves, we do not like La Rochefoucauld. And we can hardly accept as his excuse that he was merely saying what he thought were his own observations of the way of the world. His mouth spoke as his mind dictated to him. He saw the world darkly, from a one-sided point of view, and he would make us believe that man is by nature evil-minded and uncharitable. Intercourse with others of that stamp will make him so, and therefore we think that La Rochefoucauld's teaching—if such it can be called—is pernicious. It inclines men to be suspicious, treacherous, and ignoble in their dealings. The sentence, 'Les hommes ne vivroient pas longtemps en société s'ils n'étoient dupes les uns des autres,' is not merely an outburst of momentary ill-humour, for we find the meaning of the words corroborated in nearly every page of his book. Voltaire may have taken pleasure in seeing the motives for our self-love so constantly presented to us. For our own part we think otherwise. We would say to La Rochefoucauld, 'Tell me who are your friends, and I'll tell you what you are.'

It would be futile to judge of such a book as this on first principles. Everyone will make his own observations on men as he finds they act towards himself. We are not all that we ought to be. As each one lives, he learns what is wanting in others. We see their littlenesses, and their defects have a larger place in the composition of their nature than the more glaring faults that are obvious to all the world. We all recognise the truth of, 'Il y a des gens dans le monde qui n'ont pour tout mérite que les vices qui servent au commerce de la vie.' It is not the want of truth in La Rochefoucauld to which we are now objecting, but to his constant and intended ill-nature. What right has he to say, 'Il y a peu de femmes dont le mérite dure plus que la beauté'? Or again, 'Il y a peu d'honnêtes femmes qui ne soient lasses de leur métier'? We may notice that La Rochefoucauld guards himself from appearing to be too absolute by putting in as a saving clause into many of his sentences a word such as 'often,' 'there are some who,' 'for the most part,' &c., and this has also the effect of diminishing the meaning of the phrase.

Few only of La Rochefoucauld's maxims point to the nobler qualities in man; a good many are trivial and commonplace, whilst some are witty and have in them a little bit of sharpness that is not unpleasant. Of these we shall mention a few, and say no more.

'La souveraine habileté consiste à bien connoître le prix des choses.'

'On sait assez qu'il ne faut guère parler de sa femme, mais on ne sait pas assez qu'on devroit encore moins parler de soi.'

'Ce qui se trouve le moins dans la galanterie, c'est de l'amour.' (Poor Madame de Longueville!)

'Il n'y a point de sots si incommodes que ceux qui ont de l'esprit.' (This sentiment might sometimes be received with cheers from the Ministerial bench in the House of Commons.)

HENRY M. TROLLOPE.

My Friend the Beach-comber.

‘**B**EEN in some near things in the islands?’ said my friend the Beach-comber; ‘I fancy I *have*.’

The Beach-comber then produced a piece of luggage like a small Gladstone bag, which he habitually carried, and thence he extracted a cigar about the size of the butt of a light trout-rod. He took a vesuvian out of a curious brown hollowed nut-shell, mounted in gold (the Beach-comber, like Mycenæ in Homer, was *polychrysos*, rich in gold in all his equipments), and occupied himself with the task of setting fire to his weed. The process was a long one, and reminded me of the arts by which the Beach-comber’s native friends fire the root of a tree before they attack it with their stone tomahawks. However, there was no use in trying to hurry the ancient mariner. He was bound to talk while his cigar lasted, thereby providing his hearer with plenty of what is called ‘copy’ in the profession of letters.

The Beach-comber was a big man, loose (in *physique* only of course), broad, and black-bearded, his face about the colour of a gun-stock. We called him by the nickname he bore¹ (he bore it very good-naturedly) because he had spent the years of his youth among the countless little islands of the South Seas, especially among those which lie at ‘the back of beyond,’ that is, on the far side of the broad shoulder of Queensland. In these regions the white man takes his life and whatever native property he can annex in his hand, caring no more for the Aborigines’ Protection Society than for the Kyrle Company for diffusing stamped leather hangings and Moorish lustre plates among the poor of the East-End. The common Beach-comber is usually an outcast from that civilisation of which, in the

¹ ‘Beach-comber is the local term for the European adventurers and long-shore loafers who infest the Pacific Archipelagoes. There is a well-known tale of an English castaway on one of the isles, who was worshipped as a deity by the ignorant people. At length he made his escape, by swimming, and was taken aboard a British vessel, whose captain accosted him roughly. The mariner turned aside and dashed away a tear: ‘I’ve been a god for months, and you call me a (something alliterative) Beach-comber!’ he exclaimed, and refused to be comforted.

islands, he is the only pioneer. Sometimes he deals in rum, sometimes in land, most frequently in 'black-bird'—that is, in coolies, as it is now usual to call slaves. Not, of course, that all coolies are slaves. My friend the Beach-comber treated his dusky labourers with distinguished consideration, fed them well, housed them well, taught them the game of cricket, and dismissed them, when the term of their engagement was up, to their island homes. He was, in fact, a planter, with a taste for observing wild life in out-of-the-way places.

'Yes, I have been in some near things,' he went on, when the trunk of his cigar was fairly ignited. 'Do you see these two front teeth?'

The Beach-comber opened wide a cavernous mouth. The late Mr. Macadam, who invented the system of making roads called by his name, allowed no stone to be laid on the way which the stone-breaker could not put in his mouth. The Beach-comber could almost have inserted a mile-stone.

I did not see 'these two front teeth,' because, like the Spanish Fleet, they were not in sight. But I understood my friend to be drawing my attention to their absence.

'I see the place where they have been,' I answered.

'Well, *that* was a near go,' said the Beach-comber. 'I was running for my life before a pack of screeching naked beggars in the Admiralty Islands. I had emptied my revolver, and my cartridges, Government ones, were all in a parcel—a confounded Government parcel—fastened with a strong brass wire. Where's the good of giving you cartridges, which you need in a hurry if you need them at all, in a case you can't open without a special instrument? Well, as I ran, and the spears whizzed round me, I tore at the wire with my teeth. It gave at last, or my head would now be decorating a stake outside the chief's *pah*. But my teeth gave when the brass cord gave, and I'll never lift a heavy table with them again.'

'But you got out the cartridges?'

'Oh, yes. I shot two of the beggars, and "purwailed on them to stop," and then we came within sight of the boats, and Thompson shouted, and the others bolted. What a voice that fellow had! It reminded me of that Greek chap I read about at school; he went and faced the Trojans with nothing in his hand, and they hooked it when they only heard him roar. Poor Thompson!' and the Beach-comber drank, in silence, to the illustrious dead.

‘Who shot him?’

‘A scientific kind of poop, a botanising shaloot that was travelling around with a tin box on his back, collecting beetles and bird-skins. Poor Thompson! this was how it happened. He was the strongest fellow I ever saw; he could tear a whole pack of cards across with his hands. That man was all muscle. He and I had paddled this botanising creature across to an island where some marooned fellow had built a hut, and we kept a little whisky in a bunk, and used the place sometimes for shooting or fishing. It was latish one night, the botanist had not come home, I fell asleep, and left Thompson with the whisky. I was awakened by hearing a shot, and there lay Thompson, stone-dead, a bullet in his forehead, and the naturalist with a smoking revolver in his hand, and trembling like an aspen leaf. It seems he had lost his way, and by the time he got home, Thompson was mad drunk, and came for him with his fists. If once he hit you, just in play, it was death, and the stranger knew that. Thompson had him in a corner, and I am bound to say that shooting was his only chance. Poor old Thompson!’

‘And what was done to the other man?’

‘Done, why there was no one to do anything, unless I had shot him, or marooned him. No law runs in these parts. Thompson was the best partner I ever had; he was with me in that lark with the tabooed pig.’

‘What lark?’

‘Oh, I’ve often spun you the yarn.’

‘Never!’

‘Well, it was like this. Thompson and I, and some other chaps, started in a boat, with provisions, just prospecting about the islands. So we went in and out among the straits—horrid places, clear water full of sharks, and nothing but mangroves on every side. One of these sounds is just like another. Once I was coming home in a coasting steamer and got them to set me down on a point that I believed was within half-a-mile of my place. Well, I was landed, and they and I began walking homewards, when I found I was on the wrong track, miles and miles of mangrove swamp, cut up with a dozen straits of salt water, lay between me and the station. The first stretch of water I came to, gad! I didn’t like it. I kept prospecting for sharks very close before I swam it, with my clothes on my head. I was in awful luck all the way, though,—not one of them had a snap at me.’

‘But about the taboo pig? *Revenons à nos cochons!*’

‘I’m coming to that. Well, we landed at an island we had never been on before, where there was a village of Coast natives. A crowd of beehive-shaped huts, you know, the wall about three feet high, and all the rest roof, wattle, and clay, and moss, built as neat as a bird’s-nest outside, not very sweet inside. So we landed and got out the grub, and marched up to the village. Not a soul to be seen; not a black in the place. Their gear was all cleaned out too; there wasn’t a net, nor a spear, nor a mat, nor a bowl (they’re great beggars for making pipkins), not a blessed fetich stone even, in the whole place. You never saw anything so forsaken. But just in the middle of the row of huts, you might call it a street if you liked, there lay, as happy as if he was by the fireside among the children in Galway, a great big fat beast of a hog. Well, we couldn’t make out what had become of the people. Thought we had frightened them away, only then they’d have taken the hog. Suddenly, out of some corner, comes a black fellow making signs of peace. He held up his hands to show he had no weapon in them, and then he held up his feet ditto.’

‘Why on earth did he hold up his feet?’

‘To show he wasn’t trailing a spear between his toes; that is a common dodge of theirs. We made signs to him to come up, and up he came, speaking a kind of pigeon English. It seems he was an interpreter by trade, paying a visit to his native village; so we tried to get out of him what it was all about. Just what we might have expected. A kid had been born in the village that day.’

‘What had the birth of a kid got to do with it?’

‘It’s like this, don’t you know. Every tribe is divided into Coast natives and Bush natives. One set lives by the sea, and is comparatively what you might call civilised. The other set, their cousins, live in the Bush, and are a good deal more savage. Now, when anything out of the way, especially anything of a fortunate kind, happens in one division of the tribe, the other division pops down on them, loots everything it can lay hands on, maltreats the women, breaks what’s too heavy to carry, and generally plays the very mischief. The birth of a child is *always* celebrated in that way.’

‘And don’t the others resist?’

‘Resist! No! It would be the height of rudeness. Do *you* resist when people leave cards at your house, “with kind in-

quiries?" It's just like that; a way they have of showing a friendly interest.'

'But what can be the origin of such an extraordinary custom?'

'I don't know. Guess it has a kind of civilising effect, as you'll see. Resources of civilisation get handed on to the Bush tribes, but that can't be what it was begun for. However, recently the tribes have begun to run cunning, and they hide themselves and all their goods when they have reason to expect a friendly visit. This was what they had done the day we landed. But, while we were jawing with the interpreter, we heard a yell to make your hair stand on end. The Bush tribe came down on the village all in their war paint,—white clay; an arrangement, as you say, in black and white. Down they came, rushed into every hut, rushed out again, found nothing, and an awful rage they were in. They said this kind of behaviour was most ungentlemanly; why where was decent feeling? where was neighbourliness? While they were howling, they spotted the hog, and made for him in a minute; here was luncheon, anyhow,—pork chops. So they soon had a fire, set a light to one of the houses in fact, and heaped up stones; that's how they cook. They cut you up in bits, wrap them in leaves——'

'*En papillotte?*'

'Just that, and broil you on the hot stones. They cook everything that way.'

'Are they cannibals?'

'Oh yes, in war-time. Or criminals they'll eat. I've often heard the queer yell a native will give, quite a peculiar cry, when he is carrying a present of cold prisoner of war from one chief to another. He cries out like that, to show what his errand is, at the border of the village property.'

'Before entering the Mark?' I said, for I had been reading Sir Henry Maine.

'The *pah*, the beggars about me call it,' said the Beach-comber; 'perhaps some niggers you've been reading about call it the Mark. I don't know. But to be done with this pig. The fire was ready, and they were just going to cut the poor beast's throat with a green-stone knife, when the interpreter up and told them "hands off." "That's a taboo pig," says he. "A black fellow that died six months ago that pig belonged to. When he was dying, and leaving his property to his friends, he was very sorry to part with the pig, so he made him taboo; nobody can touch him. To eat him is death."

'Of course this explained why that pig had been left when all the other live stock and portable property was cleared out. Nobody would touch a taboo pig, and that pig, I tell you, was tabooed an inch thick. The man he belonged to had been a *Tohunga*, and still "walked," in the shape of a lizard. Well, the interpreter, acting most fairly, I must say, explained all this to the Bush tribe, and we went down to the boat and lunched. Presently a smell of roast pork came drifting down on the wind. They had been hungry and mad after their march, and they were cooking the taboo pig. The interpreter grew as white as a Kaneka can, he knew something would happen.

'Presently the Bush fellows came down to the boat, licking their lips. There hadn't been much more than enough to go round, and they accepted some of our grub, and took to it kindly.

'Let's offer them some rum,' says Thompson; he never cruised without plenty aboard. 'No, no,' says I; 'tea, give them tea.' But Thompson had a keg of rum out, and a tin can, and served round some pretty stiff grog. Now, would you believe it, these poor devils had never tasted spirits before? Most backward race they were. But they took to the stuff, and got pretty merry, till one of them tried to move back to the village. He staggered up and down, and tumbled against rocks, and finally he lay flat and held on tight. The others, most of them, were no better as soon as they tried to move. A rare fright they were in! They began praying and mumbling; praying, of all things, to the soul of the taboo pig! They thought they were being punished for the awful sin they had committed in eating him. The interpreter improved the occasion. He told them their faults pretty roundly. Hadn't he warned them? Didn't they know the pig was taboo? Did any good ever come of breaking a taboo? The soberer fellows sneaked off into the Bush, the others lay and snoozed till the Coast tribe came out of hiding, and gave it to them pretty warm with throwing sticks and the flat side of waddies. I guess the belief in taboo won't die out of that Bush tribe in a hurry.'

'It was like the companions of Odysseus devouring the oxen of the Sun,' I said.

'Very likely,' replied the Beach-comber. 'Never heard of the parties. They're superstitious beggars, these Kanekas. You've heard of buying a thing "for a song?" Well, I got my station for a whistle. They believe that spirits twitter and whistle, and you'll hardly get them to go out at night, even with a boiled

potato in their hands, which they think good against ghosts, for fear of hearing the bogies. So I just went whistling 'Bonny Dundee' at nights all round the location I fancied, and after a week of that, not a nigger would go near it. They made it over to me, gratis, with an address on my courage and fortitude. I gave them some blankets in ; and that's how real property used to change hands in the Pacific. But the old times are done,—and here the Beach-comber began to use the most undeserved and libellous expressions, which I scorn to repeat, about Mr. Gladstone and the Government which 'of late happily controlled the destinies of the Empire.'

A. LANG.

Prince Otto :

A ROMANCE.

By R. L. STEVENSON.

BOOK II.—OF LOVE AND POLITICS.

CHAPTER X.

GOTTHOLD'S REVISED OPINION ; AND THE FALL COMPLETED.

THE Countess left poor Otto with a caress and buffet simultaneously administered. The welcome word about his wife and the virtuous ending of his interview, should doubtless have delighted him. But for all that, as he shouldered the bag of money and set forward to rejoin his groom, he was conscious of many aching sensibilities. To have gone wrong and to have been set right, makes but a double trial for man's vanity. The discovery of his own weakness and possible unfaith had staggered him to the heart; and to hear, in the same hour, of his wife's fidelity from one who loved her not, increased the bitterness of the surprise.

He was about halfway between the fountain and the Flying Mercury, before his thoughts began to be clear; and he was surprised to find them angry. He paused in a kind of temper, and struck with his hand a little shrub. Thence there arose instantly a cloud of awakened sparrows, which as instantly dispersed and disappeared into the thicket. He looked at them stupidly, and when they were gone continued staring at the stars. 'I am angry. By what right? By none!' he thought; but he was still angry. He cursed Madam von Rosen and instantly repented. Heavy was the money on his shoulders.

When he reached the fountain, he did, out of ill-humour and parade, an unpardonable act. He gave the money bodily to the dishonest groom. 'Keep this for me,' he said, 'until I call for it to-morrow. It is a great sum, and by that you will judge that I have not condemned you.' And he strode away ruffling, as if he

had done something generous. It was a desperate stroke to re-enter at the point of the bayonet into his self-esteem; and, like all such, it was fruitless in the end. He got to bed with the devil, it appeared; kicked and tumbled till the gray of the morning; and then fell inopportunely into a leaden slumber, and awoke to find it ten. To miss the appointment with old Killian after all, had been too tragic a miscarriage; and he hurried with all his might, found the groom (for a wonder) faithful to his trust, and arrived only a few minutes before noon in the guest chamber of the Morning Star. Killian was there in his Sunday's best and looking very gaunt and rigid; a lawyer from Brandenau stood sentinel over his outspread papers; and the groom and the landlord of the inn were called to serve as witnesses. The obvious deference of that great man, the innkeeper, plainly affected the old farmer with surprise; but it was not until Otto had taken the pen and signed that the truth flashed upon him fully. Then, indeed, he was beside himself.

'His Highness!' he cried, 'His Highness!' and repeated the exclamation till his mind had grappled fairly with the facts. Then he turned to the witnesses. 'Gentlemen,' he said, 'you dwell in a country highly favoured by God; for of all generous gentlemen, I will say it on my conscience, this one is the king. I am an old man, and I have seen good and bad, and the year of the great famine; but a more excellent gentleman, no, never.'

'We know that,' cried the landlord, 'we know that well in Grünewald. If we saw more of his Highness we should be the better pleased.'

'It is the kindest Prince,' began the groom, and suddenly closed his mouth upon a sob, so that everyone turned to gaze upon his emotion. Otto not last; Otto struck with remorse, to see the man so grateful.

Then it was the lawyer's turn to pay a compliment. 'I do not know what Providence may hold in store,' he said, 'but this day should be a bright one in the annals of your reign. The shouts of armies could not be more eloquent than the emotion on these honest faces.' And the Brandenau lawyer bowed, skipped, stepped back and took snuff, with the air of a man who has found and seized an opportunity.

'Well, young gentleman,' said Killian, 'if you will pardon me the plainness of calling you a gentleman, many a good day's work you have done, I doubt not, but never a better or one that will be better blessed; and whatever, sir, may be your happiness

and triumph in that high sphere to which you have been called, it will be none the worse, sir, for an old man's blessing !'

The scene had almost assumed the proportions of an ovation ; and when the Prince escaped he had but one thought : to go wherever he was most sure of praise. His conduct at the board of council occurred to him as a fair chapter ; and this evoked the memory of Gotthold. To Gotthold he would go.

Gotthold was in the library as usual, and laid down his pen, a little angrily, on Otto's entrance. 'Well,' he said, 'here you are.'

'Well,' returned Otto, 'we made a revolution, I believe.'

'It is what I fear,' returned the Doctor.

'How?' said Otto. 'Fear? Fear is the burnt child. I have learned my strength and the weakness of the others ; and I now mean to govern.'

Gotthold said nothing, but he looked down and smoothed his chin.

'You disapprove?' cried Otto. 'You are a weathercock.'

'On the contrary,' replied the Doctor. 'My observation has confirmed my fears. It will not do, Otto, not do.'

'What will not do?' demanded the Prince, with a sickening stab of pain.

'None of it,' answered Gotthold. 'You are unfitted for a life of action ; you lack the stamina, the habit, the restraint, the patience. Your wife is greatly better, vastly better ; and though she is in bad hands, displays a very different aptitude. She is a woman of affairs ; you are—dear boy, you are yourself. I bid you back to your amusements ; like a smiling dominie, I give you holidays for life. Yes,' he continued, 'there is a day appointed for all when they shall turn again upon their own philosophy. I had grown to disbelieve impartially in all ; and if in the atlas of the sciences there were two charts I disbelieved in more than all the rest, they were politics and morals. I had a sneaking kindness for your vices ; as they were negative, they flattered my philosophy ; and I called them almost virtues. Well, Otto, I was wrong ; I have forsworn my sceptical philosophy ; and I perceive your faults to be unpardonable. You are unfit to be a Prince, unfit to be a husband. And I give you my word, I would rather see a man capably doing evil, than blundering about good.'

Otto was still silent, in extreme dudgeon.

Presently the Doctor resumed : 'I will take the smaller matter first ; your conduct to your wife. You went, I hear, and had an

explanation. That may have been right or wrong; I know not; at least, you had stirred her temper. At the council, she insults you; well, you insult her back, a man to a woman, a husband to his wife, in public! Next upon the back of this, you propose—the story runs like wildfire—to recall the power of signature. Can she ever forgive that? a woman? a young woman? ambitious, conscious of talents beyond yours? Never, Otto. And to sum all, at such a crisis in your married life, you get into a window corner with that ogling dame, von Rosen. I do not dream that there was any harm; but I do say it was an idle disrespect to your wife. Why, man, the woman is not decent.'

'Gotthold,' said Otto, 'I will hear no evil of the Countess.'

'You will certainly hear no good of her,' returned Gotthold; 'and if you wish your wife to be the pink of nicety, you should clear your court of demi-reputations.'

'The commonplace injustice of a by-word,' Otto cried. 'The partiality of sex. She is a demirep; what then is Gondremark? Were she a man—'

'It would be all one,' retorted Gotthold roughly. 'When I see a man, come to years of wisdom, who speaks in double-meanings and is the braggart of his vices, I spit on the other side. "You, my friend," say I, "are not even a gentleman." Well, she's not even a lady.'

'She is the best friend I have, and I choose that she shall be respected,' Otto said.

'If she is your friend, so much the worse,' replied the Doctor. 'It will not stop there.'

'Ah!' cried Otto, 'there is the charity of virtue! All evil in the spotted fruit. But I can tell you, sir, that you do Madam von Rosen prodigal injustice.'

'You can tell me!' said the Doctor shrewdly. 'Have you tried? have you been riding the marches?'

The blood came into Otto's face.

'Ah!' cried Gotthold, 'look at your wife and blush! There's a wife for a man to marry and then lose! She's a carnation, Otto. The soul is in her eyes.'

'You have changed your note for Seraphina, I perceive,' said Otto.

'Changed it!' cried the Doctor, with a flush. 'Why, when was it different? But I own I admired her at the council. When she sat there silent, tapping with her foot, I admired as I might a hurricane. Were I one of those who venture upon matrimony,

there had been the prize to tempt me! She invites, as Mexico invited Cortez; the enterprise is hard, the natives are unfriendly—I believe them cruel, too—but the metropolis is paved with gold and the breeze blows out of paradise. Yes, I could desire to be that conqueror. But to philander with von Rosen; never! Senses? I discard them; what are they?—pruritus! Curiosity? Reach me my anatomy!’

‘To whom do you address yourself?’ cried Otto. ‘Surely, you, of all men, know that I love my wife!’

‘O, love!’ cried Gotthold; ‘love is a great word; it is in all the dictionaries. If you had loved, she would have paid you back. What does she ask? A little ardour!’

‘It is hard to love for two,’ replied the Prince.

‘Hard? Why, there’s the touchstone! O, I know my poets!’ cried the Doctor. ‘We are but dust and fire, too arid to endure life’s scorching; and love, like the shadow of a great rock, should lend shelter and refreshment, not to the lover only, but to his mistress and to the children that reward them; and their very friends should seek repose in the fringes of that peace. Love is not love that cannot build a home. And you call it love to grudge and quarrel and pick faults? You call it love to thwart her to her face, and bandy insults? Love!’

‘Gotthold, you are unjust. I was then fighting for my country,’ said the Prince.

‘Ay, and there’s the worst of all,’ returned the Doctor. ‘You could not even see that you were wrong; that being where they were, retreat was ruin.’

‘Why, you supported me!’ cried Otto.

‘I did. I was a fool like you,’ replied Gotthold. ‘But now my eyes are open. If you go on as you have started, disgrace this fellow Gondremark, and publish the scandal of your divided house, there will befall a most abominable thing in Grünewald. A revolution, friend—a revolution.’

‘You speak strangely for a red,’ said Otto.

‘A red republican, but not a revolutionary,’ returned the Doctor. ‘An ugly thing is a Grünewalder drunk! One man alone can save the country from this pass, and that is the double-dealer Gondremark, with whom I conjure you to make peace. It will not be you; it never can be you:—you, who can do nothing, as your wife said, but trade upon your station—you, who spent the hours in begging money! And in God’s name, what for? Why money? What mystery of idiocy was this?’

'It was to no ill end. It was to buy a farm,' quoth Otto, sulkily.

'To buy a farm!' cried Gotthold. 'Buy a farm!'

'Well, what then?' returned Otto. 'I have bought it, if you come to that.'

Gotthold fairly bounded on his seat. 'And how that?' he cried.

'How?' repeated Otto, startled.

'Ay, verily, how!' returned the the Doctor. 'How came you by the money?'

The Prince's countenance darkened. 'That is my affair,' said he.

'You see you are ashamed,' retorted Gotthold. 'And so you bought a farm in the hour of your country's need—doubtless to be ready for the abdication; and I put it that you stole the funds. There are not three ways of getting money: there are but two: to earn and steal. And now, when you have combined Charles the Fifth and Long-fingered Tom, you come to me to fortify your vanity! But I will clear my mind upon this matter: until I know the right and wrong of the transaction, I put my hand behind my back. A man may be the pitifullest prince, he must be a spotless gentleman.'

The Prince had gotten to his feet, as pale as paper. 'Gotthold,' he said, 'you drive me beyond bounds. Beware, sir, beware!'

'Do you threaten me, friend Otto?' asked the Doctor grimly. 'That would be a strange conclusion.'

'When have you ever known me use my power in any private animosity?' cried Otto. 'To any private man, your words were an unpardonable insult, but at me you shoot in full security, and I must turn aside to compliment you on your plainness. I must do more than pardon, I must admire, because you have faced this—this formidable monarch, like a Nathan before David. You have uprooted an old kindness, sir, with an unsparing hand. You leave me very bare. My last bond is broken; and though I take heaven to witness that I sought to do the right, I have this reward: to find myself alone. You say I am no gentleman; yet the sneers have been upon your side; and though I can very well perceive where you have lodged your sympathies, I will forbear the taunt.'

'Otto, are you insane?' cried Gotthold, leaping up. 'Because I ask you how you came by certain monies, and because you refuse—'

‘Herr von Hohenstockwitz, I have ceased to invite your aid in my affairs,’ said Otto. ‘I have heard all that I desire, and you have sufficiently trampled on my vanity. It may be that I cannot govern, it may be that I cannot love—you tell me so with every mark of honesty; but God has granted me one virtue, and I can still forgive. I forgive you; even in this hour of passion, I can perceive my faults and your excuses; and if I desire that in future I may be spared your conversation, it is not, sir, from resentment—not resentment—but by heaven, because no man on earth could endure to be so rated. You have the satisfaction to see your sovereign weep; and that person whom you have so often taunted with his happiness, reduced to the last pitch of solitude and misery. No,—I will hear nothing; I claim the last word, sir, as your Prince; and that last word shall be—forgiveness.’

And with that Otto was gone from the apartment, and Doctor Gotthold was left alone with the most conflicting sentiments of sorrow and remorse and merriment: walking to and fro before his table, and asking himself, with hands uplifted, which of the pair of them was most to blame for this unhappy rupture. Presently, he took from a cupboard a bottle of Rhine wine and a goblet of the deep Bohemian ruby. The first glass a little warmed and comforted his bosom; with the second, he began to look down upon these troubles from a sunny mountain; yet a while, and filled with this false comfort and contemplating life throughout a golden medium, he owned to himself, with a flush, a smile and a half-pleasurable sigh, that he had been somewhat over-plain in dealing with his cousin. ‘He said the truth, too,’ added the penitent librarian, ‘for in my monkish fashion, I adore the Princess.’ And then with a still deepening flush and a certain stealth, although he sat all alone in that great gallery, he toasted Seraphina to the dregs.

CHAPTER XI.

PROVIDENCE VON ROSEN: ACT THE FIRST: SHE BEGUILLES THE
BARON.

At a sufficiently late hour or, to be more exact, at three in the afternoon, Madam von Rosen issued on the world. She swept downstairs and out across the garden, a black mantilla thrown over her head, and the long train of her black velvet dress ruthlessly sweeping in the dirt.

At the other end of that long garden, and back to back with the villa of the Countess, stood the large mansion where the Prime Minister transacted his affairs and pleasures. This distance, which was enough for decency by the easy canons of Mittwalden, the Countess swiftly traversed, opened a little door with a key, mounted a flight of stairs, and entered unceremoniously into Gondremark's study. It was a large and very high apartment; books all about the walls, papers on the table, papers on the floor; here and there a picture, somewhat scant of drapery; a great fire glowing and flaming in the blue tiled hearth; and the daylight streaming through a cupola above. In the midst of this sat the great Baron Gondremark in his shirt sleeves, his business for that day fairly at an end, and the hour arrived for relaxation. His expression, his very nature seemed to have undergone a fundamental change. Gondremark at home appeared the very antipode of Gondremark on duty. He had an air of massive jollity that well became him; grossness and geniality sat upon his features; and along with his manners, he had laid aside his sly and sinister expression. He lolled there, sunning his bulk before the fire, a noble animal.

'Hey!' he cried. 'At last!'

The Countess stepped into the room in silence, threw herself up on a chair, and crossed her legs. In her lace and velvet, with a good display of smooth black stocking and of snowy petticoat, and with the refined profile of her face and slender plumpness of her body, she showed in singular contrast to the big, black, intellectual satyr by the fire.

'How often do you send for me?' she cried. 'It is compromising.'

Gondremark laughed. 'Speaking of that,' said he, 'what in the devil's name were you about? - You were not home till morning.'

'I was giving alms,' she said.

The Baron again laughed loud and long, for in his shirt-sleeves he was a very mirthful creature. 'It is fortunate I am not jealous,' he remarked. 'But you know my way: pleasure and liberty go hand in hand. I believe what I believe; it is not much, but I believe it. But now, to business. Have you not read my letter?'

'No,' she said, 'my head ached.'

'Ah, well! then I have news indeed!' cried Gondremark. 'I was mad to see you all last night and all this morning: for yester-

day after noon, I brought my long business to a head; the ship has come home; one more dead lift, and I shall cease to fetch and carry for the Princess Ratafia. Yes, 'tis done. I have the order all in Ratafia's hand; I carry it on my heart. At the hour of twelve to-night, Prince Featherhead is to be taken in his bed and, like the bambino, whipped into a chariot; and by next morning, he will command a most romantic prospect from the donjon of the Felsenburg. Farewell, Featherhead! The war goes on, the girl is in my hand; I have long been indispensable but now I shall be sole. I have long,' he added exultingly, 'long carried this intrigue upon my shoulders, like Samson with the gates of Gaza; now I discharge that burthen.'

She had sprung to her feet a little paler. 'Is this true?' she cried.

'I tell you a fact,' he asseverated. 'The trick is played.'

'I will never believe it,' she said. 'An order? In her own hand? I will never believe it, Heinrich.'

'I swear to you,' said he.

'O what do you care for oaths—or I either? What would you swear by? Wine, women and song? It is not binding,' she said. She had come quite close up to him and laid her hand upon his arm. 'As for the order—no, Heinrich, never! I will never believe it. I will die ere I believe it. You have some secret purpose—what I cannot guess—but not one word of it is true.'

'Shall I show it you?' he asked.

'You cannot,' she answered. 'There is no such thing.'

'Incorrigible Sadducee!' he cried. 'Well, I will convert you, you shall see the order.' He moved to a chair where he had thrown his coat, and then drawing forth and holding out a paper, 'Read,' said he.

She took it greedily, and her eye flashed as she perused it.

'Hey!' cried the Baron, 'there falls a dynasty; and it was I that felled it, and I and you inherit!' He seemed to swell in stature; and next moment, with a laugh, he put his hand forward. 'Give me the dagger,' said he.

But she whisked the paper suddenly behind her back and faced him, lowering. 'No, no,' she said. 'You and I have first a point to settle. Do you suppose me blind? She could never have given that paper but to one man, and that man her lover. Here you stand—her lover, her accomplice, her master—O I well believe it, for I know your power. But what am I?' she cried; 'I, whom you deceive!'

'Jealousy!' cried Gondremark. 'Anna, I would never have believed it! But I declare to you by all that's credible, that I am not her lover. I might be, I suppose; but I never yet durst risk the declaration. The chit is so unreal; a mincing doll; she will and she will not; there is no counting on her, by God! And hitherto I have had my own way without, and keep the lover in reserve. And I say Anna,' he added with severity, 'you must break yourself of this new fit, my girl; there must be no combustion. I keep the creature under the belief that I adore her; and if she caught a breath of you and me, she is such a fool, prude, and dog in the manger, that she is capable of spoiling all.'

'All very fine,' returned the lady. 'With whom do you pass your days? and which am I to believe, your words or your actions?'

'Anna, the devil take you, are you blind?' cried Gondremark. 'You know me. Am I likely to care for such a preciosa? 'Tis hard that we should have been together for so long, and you should still take me for a troubadour. But if there is one thing that I despise and deprecate, it is all such figures in Berlin wool. Give me a human woman—like myself. You are my mate; you were made for me; you amuse me like the play. And what have I to gain that I should pretend to you? If I do not love you, what use are you to me? Why, none. It is as clear as noonday.'

'Do you love me, Heinrich?' she asked, languishing. 'Do you truly?'

'I tell you,' he cried, 'I love you next after myself. I should be all abroad if I had lost you.'

'Well, then,' said she, folding up the paper and putting it calmly in her pocket, 'I will believe you, and I join the plot. Count upon me. At midnight, did you say? It is Gordon, I see, that you have charged with it. Excellent; he will stick at nothing.'

Gondremark watched her suspiciously. 'Why do you take that paper?' he demanded. 'Give it here.'

'No,' she returned, 'I mean to keep it. It is I who must prepare the stroke; you cannot manage it without me; and to do my best I must possess the paper. Where shall I find Gordon? In his rooms?' She spoke with a rather feverish self-possession.

'Anna,' he said sternly, the black, bilious countenance of his palace rôle taking the place of the more open favour of his hours at home, 'I ask you for that paper. Once, twice and thrice.'

'Heinrich,' she returned, looking him in the face, 'take care. I will put up with no dictation.'

Both looked dangerous; and the silence lasted for a measurable interval of time. Then she made haste to have the first word; and with a laugh that rang clear and honest, 'Do not be a child,' she said. 'I wonder at you. If your assurances are true, you can have no reason to mistrust me, nor I to play you false. The difficulty is to get the Prince out of the palace without scandal. His valets are devoted; his chamberlain a slave; and yet one cry might ruin all.'

'They must be overpowered,' he said, following her to the new ground, 'and disappear along with him.'

'And your whole scheme along with them!' she cried. 'He does not take his servants when he goes a-hunting: a child could read the truth. No, no; the plan is idiotic; it must be Ratafia's. But hear me. You know the Prince worships me?'

'I know,' he said. 'Poor Featherhead, I cross his destiny!'

'Well now,' she continued, 'what if I bring him alone out of the palace, to some quiet corner of the Park—the Flying Mercury, for instance? Gordon can be posted in the thicket; the carriage wait behind the temple; not a cry, not a scuffle, not a footfall: simply, the Prince vanishes!—What do you say? Am I an able ally? Are my *beaux yeux* of service? Ah, Heinrich, do not lose your Anna!—she has power!'

He struck with his open hand upon the chimney. 'Witch!' he said, 'there is not your match for devilry in Europe. Service! the thing runs on wheels.'

'Kiss me, then, and let me go. I must not miss my Featherhead,' she said.

'Stay, stay,' said the Baron, 'not so fast. I wish, upon my soul, that I could trust you; but you are, out and in, so whimsical a devil that I dare not. Hang it, Anna, no; it's not possible!'

'You doubt me, Heinrich?' she cried.

'Doubt is not the word,' said he. 'I know you. Once you were clear of me with that paper in your pocket, who knows what you would do with it?—not you, at least—nor I. You see,' he added, shaking his head paternally upon the Countess, 'you are as vicious as a monkey.'

'I swear to you,' she cried, 'by my salvation—'

'Singular child! I have no curiosity to hear you swearing,' said the Baron.

'You think that I have no religion? You suppose me destitute of honour. Well,' she said, 'see here: I will not argue, but I tell you once for all: leave me this order and the Prince shall be arrested—take it from me and, as certain as I speak, I will upset the coach. Trust me, or fear me: take your choice.' And she offered him the paper.

The Baron, in a great contention of mind, stood irresolute, weighing the two dangers. Once his hand advanced, then dropped. 'Well,' he said, 'since trust is what you call it—'

'No more,' she interrupted. 'Do not spoil your attitude. And now since you have behaved like a good sort of fellow in the dark, I will condescend to tell you why. I go to the palace to arrange with Gordon; but how is Gordon to obey me? And how can I foresee the hours? It may be midnight; ay, and it may be night-fall; all's a chance; and to act, I must be free and hold the strings of the adventure. And now,' she cried, 'your Vivien goes. Dub me your knight!' And she held out her arms and smiled upon him radiant.

'Well,' he said, when he had kissed her, 'every man must have his folly; I thank God mine is no worse. Off with you! I have given a child a squib.'

CHAPTER XII.

PROVIDENCE VON ROSEN: ACT THE SECOND: SHE INFORMS THE PRINCE.

It was the first impulse of Madam von Rosen to return to her own villa and revise her toilette. Whatever else should come of this adventure, it was her firm design to pay a visit to the Princess. And before that woman, so little beloved, the Countess would appear at no disadvantage. It was the work of minutes. Von Rosen had the captain's eye in matters of the toilette; she was none of those who hang in Fabian helplessness among their finery and, after hours, come forth upon the world as dowdies. A glance, a loosened curl, a studied and admired disorder in the hair, a bit of lace, a touch of colour, a yellow rose implanted in the bosom; and the instant picture was complete.

'That will do,' she said. 'Bid my carriage follow me to the palace. In half an hour it should be there in waiting.'

The night was beginning to fall, and the shops to shine with

lamps along the tree-beshadowed thoroughfares of Otto's capital, when the Countess started on her high emprise. She was jocund at heart; pleasure and interest had winged her beauty, and she knew it. She paused before the glowing jeweller's; she remarked and praised a costume in the milliner's window; and when she reached the lime-tree walk, with its high, umbrageous arches and stir of passers-by in the dim alleys, she took her place upon a bench and dallied with the pleasures of the hour. It was cold, but she did not feel it, being warm within; her thoughts, in that dark corner, shone like the gold and rubies at the jeweller's; her ears, which heard the brushing of so many footfalls, transposed it into music.

What was she to do? She held the paper by which all depended. Otto and Gondremark and Ratafia, and the state itself, hung light in her balances, as light as dust; her little finger laid in either scale would set all flying; and she hugged herself upon her huge preponderance, and then laughed aloud to think how giddily it might be used. The vertigo of omnipotence, the disease of Cæsars, shook her reason. 'O the mad world!' she thought, and laughed aloud in exultation.

A child, finger in mouth, had paused a little way from where she sat, and stared with cloudy interest upon this laughing lady. She called it nearer; but the child hung back. Instantly, with that curious passion which you may see any woman in the world display, on the most odd occasions, for a similar end, the Countess bent herself with singleness of mind to overcome this diffidence; and presently, sure enough, the child was seated on her knee, thumbing and glowering at her watch.

'If you had a clay bear and a china monkey,' asked von Rosen, 'which would you prefer to break?'

'But I have neither,' said the child.

'Well,' she said, 'here is a bright florin, with which you may purchase both the one and the other; and I shall give it you at once, if you will answer my question. The clay bear or the china monkey—come!'

But the unbreeched soothsayer only stared upon the florin with big eyes; the oracle could not be persuaded to reply; and the Countess kissed him lightly, gave him the florin, set him down upon the path and resumed her way with swinging and elastic gait.

'Which shall I break?' she wondered; and she passed her hand with delight among the careful disarrangement of her locks.

‘Which?’ and she consulted heaven with her bright eyes. ‘Do I love both or neither? A little—passionately—not at all? Both or neither—both, I believe, but at least I will make hay of Ratafia.’

By the time she had passed the iron gates, mounted the drive, and set her foot upon the broad flagged terrace, the night had come completely; the palace front was thick with lighted windows; and along the balustrade, the lamp on every twentieth baluster shone clear. A few withered tracks of sunset, amber and glowworm green, still lingered in the western sky; and she paused once more to watch them fading.

‘And to think,’ she said, ‘that here am I—destiny embodied, a norn, a fate, a providence—and have no guess upon which side I shall declare myself!’ Otto’s windows were bright among the rest, and she looked on them with rising tenderness. ‘How does it feel to be deserted?’ she thought. ‘Poor, dear fool! The girl deserves that he should see this order.’

Without more delay, she passed into the palace and asked for an audience of Prince Otto. The Prince, she was told, was in his own apartment, and desired to be private. She sent her name. A man presently returned with word that the Prince tendered his apologies, but could see no one. ‘Then I will write,’ she said, and scribbled a few lines alleging urgency of life and death. ‘Help me, my Prince,’ she added; ‘none but you can help me.’ This time the messenger returned more speedily and begged the Countess to follow him: the Prince was graciously pleased to receive the Frau Gräfin von Rosen.

Otto sat by the fire in his large armoury, weapons faintly glittering all about him in the changeful light. His face was disfigured by the marks of weeping. He looked sour and sad; nor did he rise to greet his visitor, but bowed and bade the man begone. That kind of general tenderness which served the Countess for both heart and conscience, sharply smote her at this spectacle of grief and weakness; she began immediately to enter into the spirit of her part; and as soon as they were alone, taking one step forward and with a magnificent gesture—‘Up!’ she cried.

‘Madam von Rosen,’ replied Otto, dully, ‘you have used strong words. You speak of life and death. Pray, madam, who is threatened? Who is there,’ he added bitterly, ‘so destitute that even Otto of Grünwald can assist him?’

‘First learn,’ said she, ‘the names of the conspirators: the

Princess and the Baron Gondremark. Can you not guess the rest?' And then as he maintained his silence—'You!' she cried, pointing at him with her finger. 'Tis you they threaten! Your rascal and mine have laid their heads together and condemned you. But they reckoned without you and me. We make a *partie carré*, Prince, in love and politics. They lead an ace, but we shall trump it. Come, partner, shall I draw my card?'

'Madam,' he said, 'explain yourself. Indeed I fail to comprehend.'

'See, then,' said she; and handed him the order.

He took it, looked upon it with a start; and then, still without speech, he put his hand before his face. She waited for a word in vain.

'What?' she cried, 'do you take the thing downheartedly? As well seek wine in a milkpail as love in that girl's heart! Be done with this, and be a man. After the league of the lions, let us have a conspiracy of mice, and pull this piece of machinery to ground. You were brisk enough last night when nothing was at stake and all was frolic. Well, here is better sport; here is life indeed.'

He got to his feet with some alacrity, and his face, which was a little flushed, bore the marks of resolution.

'Madam von Rosen,' said he, 'I am neither unconscious nor ungrateful; this is the true continuation of your friendship; but I see that I must disappoint your expectations. You seem to expect from me some effort of resistance; but why should I resist? I have not much to gain; and now that I have read this paper, and the last of a fool's paradise is shattered, it would be hyperbolical to speak of loss in the same breath with Otto of Grünewald. I have no party; no policy; no pride, nor anything to be proud of. For what benefit or principle below the sky, do you expect me to contend? Would you have me bite and scratch like a trapped weasel? No, madam; signify to those who sent you my readiness to go. I would at least avoid a scandal.'

'You go?—of your own will, you go?' she cried.

'I cannot say so much perhaps,' he answered; 'but I go with good alacrity. I have desired a change some time; behold one offered me! Shall I refuse? Thank God, I am not so destitute of humour as to make a tragedy of such a farce.' He flicked the order on the table. 'You may signify my readiness,' he added, grandly.

'Ah,' she said, 'you are more angry than you own.'

'I, madam? angry?' he cried. 'You rave. I have no cause for anger. In every way I have been taught my weakness, my instability and my unfitness for the world. I am a plexus of weaknesses, an impotent Prince, a doubtful gentleman; and you yourself, indulgent as you are, have twice reproved my levity. And shall I be angry? I may feel the unkindness, but I have sufficient honesty of mind to see the reasons of this *coup d'état*.'

'From whom have you got this?' she cried in wonder. 'You think you have not behaved well? My Prince, were you not young and handsome, I should detest you for your virtues. You push them to the verge of common-place. And this ingratitude—'

'Understand me, Madam von Rosen,' returned the Prince, flushing a little darker, 'there can be here no talk of gratitude, none of pride. You are here, by what circumstance I know not but doubtless led by your kindness, mixed up in what regards my family alone. You have no knowledge what my wife, your sovereign, may have suffered; it is not for you—no, nor for me—to judge. I own myself in fault; and were it otherwise, a man were a very empty boaster, who should talk of love and start before a small humiliation. It is in all the copy-books that one should die to please his lady-love; and shall a man not go to prison?'

'Love? And what has love to do with being sent to gaol?' exclaimed the Countess, appealing to the walls and roof. 'Heaven knows I think as much of love as anyone; my life would prove it; but I admit no love but what is equally returned. The rest is moonshine.'

'I think of love more absolutely, madam, though I am certain no more tenderly, than a lady to whom I am indebted for such kindnesses,' returned the Prince. 'But this is unavailing. We are not here to hold a court of troubadours.'

'Still,' she replied, 'there is one thing you forget. If she conspires with Gondremark against your liberty, she may conspire with him against your honour also.'

'My honour?' he repeated. 'For a woman you surprise me. If I have failed to gain her love or play my part of husband, what right is left me? or what honour can remain in such a scene of failure? No honour that I recognise. I am become a stranger. If my wife no longer loves me, I will go to prison, since she wills it; if she love another, where should I be more in place? or whose fault is it but mine? You speak, Madam von Rosen, like too many women, with a man's tongue. Had I myself fallen into

temptation (as heaven knows, I might) I should have trembled but still hoped and asked for her forgiveness; and yet mine had been a treason in the teeth of love. But let me tell you, madam,' he pursued, with rising irritation, 'where a husband by futility, facility, and ill-timed humours has outwearied his wife's patience, I will suffer neither man nor woman to misjudge her. She is free: the man has been found wanting.'

'Because she loves you not?' the Countess cried. 'You know she is incapable of such a feeling.'

'Rather, it was I who was born incapable of winning it,' said Otto.

Madam von Rosen broke into sudden laughter. 'Fool,' she cried, 'I am in love with you myself.'

'Ah, madam, you are most compassionate,' the Prince retorted, smiling. 'But this is waste debate. I know my purpose. Perhaps, to equal you in frankness, I know and embrace my advantage. I am not without the spirit of adventure. I am in a false position—so recognised by public acclamation: do you grudge me, then, my issue?'

'If your mind is made up, why should I dissuade you?' said the Countess. 'I own, with a bare face, I am the gainer. Go, you take my heart with you, or more of it than I desire; I shall not sleep at night for thinking of your misery. But do not be afraid; I would not spoil you, you are such a fool and hero.'

'Alas, madam,' cried the Prince, 'and your unlucky money! I did amiss to take it, but you are a wonderful persuader. And I thank God, I can still offer you the fair equivalent.' He took some papers from the chimney. 'Here, madam, are the title deeds,' he said; 'where I am going, they can certainly be of no use to me, and I have now no other hope of making up to you your kindness. You made the loan without formality, obeying your kind heart. The parts are somewhat changed; the sun of this Prince of Grünewald is upon the point of setting; and I know you better than to doubt you will once more waive ceremony, and accept the best that I can give you. If I may look for any pleasure in the coming time, it will be to remember that the peasant is secure, and my most generous friend no loser.'

'Do you not understand my odious position?' cried the Countess. 'Dear Prince, it is upon your fall that I begin my fortune.'

'It was the more like you to tempt me to resistance,' returned

Otto. 'But this cannot alter our relations; and I must, for the last time, lay my commands upon you in the character of Prince.' And with his loftiest dignity, he forced the deeds on her acceptance.

'I hate the very touch of them,' she cried.

There followed upon this a little silence. 'At what time,' resumed Otto, '(if indeed you know) am I to be arrested?'

'Your Highness, when you please!' exclaimed the Countess. 'Or if you choose to tear that paper, never!'

'I would rather it were done quickly,' said the Prince. 'I shall take but time to leave a letter for the Princess.'

'Well,' said the Countess, 'I have advised you to resist; at the same time, if you intend to be dumb before your shearers, I must say that I ought to set about arranging your arrest. I offered'—she hesitated—'I offered to manage it, intending, my dear friend, intending, upon my soul, to be of use to you. Well, if you will not profit by my good will, then be of use to me; and as soon as ever you feel ready, go to the Flying Mercury where we met last night. It will be none the worse for you; and to make it quite plain, it will be better for the rest of us.'

'Dear madam, certainly,' said Otto. 'If I am prepared for the chief evil, I shall not quarrel with details. Go, then, with my best gratitude; and when I have written a few lines of leave-taking, I shall immediately hasten to keep tryst. To-night, I shall not meet so dangerous a cavalier,' he added, with a smiling gallantry.

As soon as Madam von Rosen was gone, he made a great call upon his self-command. He was face to face with a miserable passage where, if it were possible, he desired to carry himself with dignity. As to the main fact, he never swerved or faltered; he had come so heart-sick and so cruelly humiliated from his talk with Gotthold, that he embraced the notion of imprisonment with something bordering on joy. Here was, at least, a step which he thought blameless; here was a way from out his troubles. He sat down to write to Seraphina; and his anger blazed. The tale of his forbearances mounted, in his eyes, to something monstrous; still more monstrous, the coldness, egoism and cruelty, that had required and thus requited them. The pen which he had taken trembled in his hand. He was amazed to find his resignation fled, but was not able to recall it. In a few white-hot words, he bade adieu, dubbed desperation by the name of love, and called his wrath forgiveness; cast but one look of

leave-taking upon the place that was no longer to be his; and hurried forth—love's prisoner—or pride's.

He took the private passage, trod so often in less momentous hours. The porter let him out; and the bountiful, cold air of night and the pure glory of the stars received him on the threshold. He looked around him, breathing deep of earth's plain fragrance; he looked up into the great array of heaven, and was quieted. His little turgid life dwindled to its true proportions; he saw this great, flame-hearted martyr stand but a speck in that cool cupola of night; he felt his cureless injuries already soothed; the live air of out of doors, the quiet of the world, as if by their silent music, sobered his emotions.

'Well, I forgive her,' he said. 'If it be of any use to her, I forgive.'

And with brisk steps, he crossed the garden, issued upon the Park, and by a glimmering alley, came at last to where the Flying Mercury stood poised. A dark figure moved forward from the shadow of the pedestal.

'I have to ask your pardon, sir,' a voice observed, 'but if I am right in taking you for the Prince, I was given to understand that you would be prepared to meet me.'

'Herr Gordon, I believe?' said Otto.

'Herr Oberst Gordon,' replied that officer. 'This is rather a ticklish business for a man to be embarked in; and to find that all is to go pleasantly, is a great relief to me. The carriage is at hand; shall I have the honour of following your Highness?'

'Colonel,' said the Prince, 'I have now come to that happy moment of my life, when I have orders to receive but none to give.'

'A most philosophical remark!' returned the Colonel. 'Begad, a very pertinent remark! it might be Plutarch. I am not a drop's blood to your Highness or indeed to anyone in this principality; or else I should dislike my orders. But as it is, and since there is nothing unnatural or unbecoming on my side, and your Highness takes it in good part, I begin to believe we may have a capital time together, sir—a capital time. For a gaoler is only a fellow captive.'

'May I inquire, Herr Gordon,' asked Otto, 'what led you to accept this dangerous and I would fain hope thankless office?'

'Very natural, I am sure,' replied the officer of fortune. 'My pay is, in the meanwhile, doubled.'

'Well, sir, I will not presume to criticise,' returned the Prince. 'And I perceive the carriage.'

Sure enough, at the intersection of two alleys of the Park, a coach and four, conspicuous by its lanterns, stood in waiting. And a little way off about a score of lancers were drawn up under the shadow of the trees.

CHAPTER XIII.

PROVIDENCE VON ROSEN: ACT THE THIRD: SHE ENLIGHTENS
SERAPHINA.

WHEN Madam von Rosen left the Prince, she hurried straight to Colonel Gordon; and not content with directing the arrangements, she had herself accompanied the soldier of fortune to the Flying Mercury. The Colonel gave her his arm, and the talk between this pair of conspirators ran high and lively. The Countess, indeed, was in a whirl of pleasure and excitement; her tongue stumbled upon laughter, her eyes shone, the colour that was usually wanting now perfected her face. It would have taken little more to bring Gordon to her feet—or so, at least, she thought, disdaining the idea.

Hid in some lilac bushes, she enjoyed the great decorum of the arrest, and heard the dialogue of the two men die away along the path. Soon after the rolling of a carriage and the beat of hoofs arose in the still air of night, and passed speedily farther and fainter into silence. The Prince was gone.

Madam von Rosen consulted her watch. She had still, she thought, time enough for the tit-bit of her evening; and hurrying to the palace, winged by the fear of Gondremark's arrival, she sent her name and a pressing request for a reception to the Princess Seraphina. As the Countess von Rosen undisguised, she was secure of a refusal; but as an emissary of the Baron's, for so she chose to style herself, she gained immediate entry.

The Princess sat alone at table, making a feint of dining. Her cheeks were mottled, her eyes heavy; she had neither slept nor eaten; even her dress had been neglected. In short, she was out of health, out of looks, out of heart, and hag-ridden by her conscience. The Countess drew a swift comparison, and shone brighter still in beauty.

'You come, madam, *de la part de Monsieur le Baron*,' drawled the Princess. 'Be seated! What have you to say?'

'To say?' repeated Madam von Rosen. 'O, much to say!

Much to say, that I would rather not, and much to leave unsaid that I would rather say. For I am like St. Paul, your Highness, and always wish to do the things I should not. Well! to be categorical—that is the word?—I took the Prince your order. He could not credit his senses. “Ah,” he cried, “dear Madam von Rosen, it is not possible—it cannot be—I must hear it from your lips. My wife is a poor girl misled, she is only silly, she is not cruel.” “*Mon Prince*,” said I, “a girl—and therefore cruel; youth kills flies.”—He had such pain to understand it!’

‘Madam von Rosen,’ said the Princess, in most steadfast tones but with a rose of anger in her face, ‘who sent you here, and for what purpose? Tell your errand. Hitherto you have but tried my patience.’

‘O madam, I believe you understand me very well,’ returned von Rosen. ‘I have not your philosophy. I wear my heart upon my sleeve, excuse the indecency! It is a very little one,’ she laughed, ‘and I so often change the sleeve!’

‘Am I to understand the Prince has been arrested?’ asked the Princess, rising.

‘While you sat there dining!’ cried the Countess, still nonchalantly seated.

‘You have discharged your errand,’ was the reply, ‘I will not detain you.’

‘O no, madam,’ said the Countess, with your permission, I have not yet done. I have borne much this evening in your service. I have suffered. I was made to suffer in your service.’ She unfolded, as she spoke, her fan. Quick as her pulses beat, the fan waved languidly. It was in her bright face and eyes, and her triumphant beauty, looking down, mile deep, upon her rival, that the thrill of her emotion stood confessed.

‘You are no servant, Madam von Rosen, of mine,’ said Seraphina.

‘No, madam, indeed,’ returned the Countess; ‘but we both serve the same person, as you know—or if you do not, then I have the pleasure of informing you. Your conduct is so light—so light,’ she repeated, the fan wavering higher like a butterfly, ‘that perhaps you do not truly understand.’ The Countess rolled her fan together, laid it in her lap, and rose to a less languorous position. ‘Indeed,’ she continued, ‘I should be sorry to see any young woman in your situation. You began with every advantage, birth, a suitable marriage—quite pretty too—and see what you have come to! My poor girl, to think of it!’

But there is nothing that does so much harm,' observed the Countess finely, 'as giddiness of mind.' And she once more unfurled the fan, and fanned herself approvingly.

'I will no longer permit you to forget yourself,' cried Seraphina. 'What have you been doing? You are mad, I think.'

'Not mad,' returned von Rosen. 'Sane enough to know you dare not break with me to-night, and to profit by the knowledge. I left my poor, pretty Prince Charming crying his eyes out for a wooden doll. My heart is soft; I love my pretty Prince; you will never understand it, but I long to give my Prince his doll, dry his poor eyes, and send him happy with a kiss. O you immature fool!' the Countess cried, rose to her feet, and pointed at the Princess the closed fan that now began to tremble in her hand. 'O wooden doll!' she cried, 'have you a heart, or blood, or any nature? This is a man, child—a man who loves you. O, it will not happen twice! it is not common; beautiful and clever women look in vain for it. And you, you pitiful schoolgirl, tread this jewel underfoot! you, stupid with your vanity! Before you try to govern kingdoms, you should first be able to behave yourself at home; home is the woman's kingdom. She paused and laughed a little, strangely to hear and look upon. 'I will tell you one of the things,' she said, 'that were to stay unspeakable. Von Rosen is a better woman than you, my Princess, though you will never have the pain of understanding it; and when I took the Prince your order, and looked upon his face, my soul was melted—O, I am frank—here, within my arms, I offered him repose!' She advanced a step superbly as she spoke, with outstretched arms; and Seraphina shrank. 'Do not be alarmed!' the Countess cried; 'I am not offering that hermitage to you; in all the world there is but one who wants to, and him you have dismissed! "If it will give her pleasure I should wear the martyr's crown," he cried, "I will embrace the thorns." I tell you—I am quite frank—I put the order in his power and begged him to resist. You, who have betrayed your husband, may betray me to Gondremark; my Prince would betray no one. Understand it plainly,' she cried, 'tis of his pure forbearance you sit there; he had the power—I gave it him—to change the parts; and he refused, and went to prison in your place.'

The Princess spoke with some distress. 'Your violence shocks me and pains me,' she began, 'but I cannot be angry with what at least does honour to the mistaken kindness of your heart,

it was right for me to know this. I will condescend to tell you. It was with deep regret that I was driven to this step. I admit in many ways the Prince—I admit his amiability. It was our great misfortune, it was perhaps somewhat of my fault, that we were so unsuited to each other; but I have a regard, a real regard, for all his qualities. As a private person I should think as you do. It is difficult, I know, to make allowances for state considerations. I have only with sincere reluctance obeyed the call of a superior duty; and so soon as I dare do it for the safety of the state, I promise you the Prince shall be released. Many in my situation, would have resented your freedoms. I am not,—’ and she looked for a moment rather piteously upon the Countess, ‘I am not altogether so inhuman as you think.’

‘And you can put these troubles of the state,’ the Countess cried, ‘to weigh with a man’s love?’

‘Madam von Rosen, these troubles are affairs of life and death to many; to the Prince, and perhaps even to yourself, among the number,’ replied the Princess with dignity. ‘I have learned, madam, although still so young, in a hard school, that my own feelings must everywhere come last.’

‘O callow innocence!’ exclaimed the other. ‘Is it possible you do not know, or not suspect, the intrigue in which you move? I find it in my heart to pity you! We are both women after all—poor girl, poor girl!—and who is born a woman is born a fool. And though I hate all women—come, for the common folly, I forgive you. Your Highness’—she dropped a deep stage courtesy and resumed her fan—‘I am going to insult you, to betray one who is called my lover, and if you please to use the power, to ruin my dear self. O, what a French comedy! You betray, I betray, they betray. It is now my cue. The letter, yes. Behold the letter, madam, its seal unbroken as I found it by my bed this morning; for I was out of humour, and I get many, too many, of these favours. For your own sake, for the sake of my Prince Charming, for the sake of this great principality that sits so heavy on your conscience, open it and read!’

‘Am I to understand,’ inquired the Princess, ‘that this letter in any way regards me?’

‘You see I have not opened it,’ replied von Rosen; ‘but ’tis mine, and I beg you to experiment.’

‘I cannot look at it till you have,’ returned Seraphina very seriously. ‘There may be matter there not fit for me to see; it is a private letter.’

The Countess tore it open, glanced it through, and tossed it back; and the Princess, taking up the sheet, recognised the hand of Gondremark and read with a sickening shock the following lines:—

‘Dearest Anna, come at once. Ratafia has done the deed, her husband to be packed to prison. This puts the minx entirely in my power; *le tour est joué*; she will now go steady in harness or I will know the reason why. Come.

‘HEINRICH.’

‘Command yourself, madam,’ said the Countess, watching with some alarm the white face of Seraphina. ‘It is in vain for you to fight with Gondremark: he has more strings than mere court favour, and could bring you down to-morrow with a word. I would not have betrayed him otherwise; but Heinrich is a man, and plays with all of you like marionettes. And now at least you see for what you sacrificed my Prince. Madam, will you take some wine? I have been cruel.’

‘Not cruel, madam—salutary,’ said Seraphina, with a phantom smile. ‘No, I thank you, I require no attentions. The first surprise affected me: will you give me time a little? I must think.’

She took her head in both her hands, and contemplated for a while the hurricane confusion of her thoughts.

‘This information reaches me,’ she said, ‘when I have need of it. I would not do as you have done, but yet I thank you. I have been much deceived in Baron Gondremark.’

‘O madam, leave Gondremark and think upon the Prince!’ cried von Rosen.

‘You speak once more as a private person,’ said the Princess; ‘nor do I blame you. But my own thoughts are more distracted. However, as I believe you are truly a friend to my—to the—as I believe,’ she said, ‘you are a friend to Otto, I shall put the order for his release into your hands this moment. Give me the ink-dish. There!’ And she wrote hastily steadying her arm upon the table, for she trembled like a reed. ‘Remember, madam,’ she resumed, handing her the order, ‘this must not be used nor spoken of at present; till I have seen the Baron, I perceive that any hurried step—I lose myself in thinking. The suddenness has shaken me.’

‘I promise you I will not use it,’ said the Countess, ‘till you

give me leave. Although I wish the Prince could be informed of it, to comfort his poor heart. And oh, I had forgotten, he has left a letter. Suffer me, madam; I will bring it you. This is the door I think?' And she sought to open it.

'The bolt is pushed,' said Seraphina flushing.

'O! O!' cried the Countess.

A silence fell between them.

'I will get it for myself,' said Seraphina, 'and in the meanwhile I beg of you to leave me. I thank you, I am sure, but I will be obliged if you will leave me.'

The Countess deeply courtesied and withdrew.

(To be continued.)

'The Donna.'

THE Editor begs to acknowledge the receipt of the following contributions:—

J. D. (Battersea) 5s. G. A. Grierson 5l. S. A. A. 5l.

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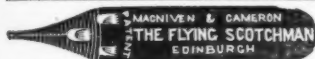
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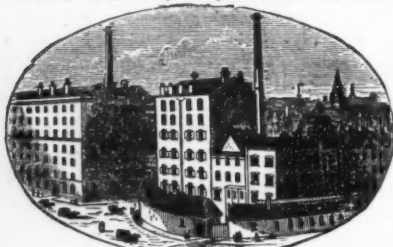
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